

INTRODUCTION

The University of Southern Indiana exists because community leaders saw the need to provide affordable, quality public higher education in Evansville and were willing to invest their time and efforts, as well as their money, to make it a reality. According to “How the South Won: The Making of USI”, (page two) the history of USI’s founding and development from 1965-1985, establishing USI meant that “more local people [would] be able to have a college education, but also that the creation of these opportunities would fuel business development [and that]...new jobs would be created, a new capital flow generated, and more important to a growing community, a new generation of leaders would be trained.”

Having just passed our 40th anniversary year, it is highly appropriate to reflect upon how—and, more importantly, why—we came to be, how we have changed over four decades, and how to best prepare ourselves to serve our increasingly large and increasingly diverse constituency in the future. We have moved from branch campus to independent university; from smaller and intimately collegial to larger and more complex, and consequently, more formal; from an idea with promise to promises fulfilled and greater expectations for the future. We need to celebrate our past and cherish institutional memory while working diligently to identify our challenges and opportunities so that the University of Southern Indiana and the people it serves will have even more cause to celebrate future anniversaries.

July 23, 2006, was a great day in the history of USI: the grand opening of the new David L. Rice Library. While the fact that library space more than doubled is impressive, what is more important is that the Rice Library illustrates much about the University. It was designed in collaboration with student, staff, and faculty users to provide not just excellent research and study facilities but also amenities that make it inviting and comfortable. It is a point of pride for the whole community, not just the campus. The grand opening was the top story in the *Evansville Courier & Press* on July 24. The following is taken from that article:

Dr. Joey Barnett, a 1981 USI graduate and member of the USI Foundation board, came to the ceremony from Nashville, Tennessee, where he directs Vanderbilt University’s pharmacology training program.

“I think this is just part of what the university’s incredibly good at, providing the educational leadership required to really push Evansville forward,” Barnett said.

USI has many challenges ahead, but also has the resources and will to meet them. We are truly a ***Future-Oriented, Learning-Focused, Distinctive, and perhaps most of all, Connected Organization.***