

The Schoolgirl

March 2026



The Schoolgirl

The demolition of the north side of the Wright Administration Building (WA) in preparation for major renovation is the most recent sign of growth on the USI campus — one that will forever change the original face of the University.

The former hallways of the Wright Building, the first structure built on campus, echoed the University's 60-plus-year history. For many who walked those halls, memories of colleagues, collaboration and personal growth are the lingering echoes. Such is the story of WA and a sculpture titled *The Schoolgirl* by Edgar Degas.

When the Administration Building opened in 1969, then Business Manager Byron C. Wright (who later became Vice President for Business Affairs and Treasurer and for whom the building was ultimately named) and Mary Lue Russler, secretary to Mr. Wright, settled into their new space. Mr. Wright viewed his department, complete with new furniture and equipment, as lacking the artwork he believed should be displayed in a university's administrative office. He tasked Mary Lue with selecting items to enhance the décor. Among these was a replica of *The Schoolgirl*, which remained with Mary Lue in several assignments in Business Affairs and the USI Foundation until her retirement in 1990.

Intent that *The Schoolgirl* should remain at home in the Wright Administration Building, Mary Lue gifted the statue to Sherrienne M. Standley, Vice President Emerita for Advancement, in whose office it was displayed until 2008. As Sherrienne prepared to retire, she entrusted the care of the sculpture to Janel Allen, Executive Assistant to the President Emerita, whose office was nearby in WA. When Janel retired in 2014, she kept tradition alive by passing it along to Carey Beury '93, then Assistant to the Provost and now Senior Executive Associate to the President, who will soon move *The Schoolgirl* into the new President's Office in the renovated Wright Administration Building.

Buildings are temporary and people come and go. It is the culture of an institution that remains. The USI culture — with its can-do attitude and its "we're all in this together for the common good" approach to problem-solving — is the tradition many of us will always remember. Relationships and shared memories are our echoes of history.

And the little statue of the schoolgirl? She will continue to unobtrusively stand in the Wright Building as a quiet symbol of our shared past and future.



Mary Lue Russler, Carey Beury, Janel Allen and Sherrienne Standley

Note from the President



Charmaine McDowell
President

Welcome to beautiful spring days.

The Retiree Coordinating Council has met and discussed several activities. First, thank you to Larry Back for suggesting our visit to Mesker Park Zoo. Those who attended enjoyed the Orchid Escape in Amazonia, especially the presentation and guided tour led by Botanical Curator Misty Minar.

Second, thanks to Janet Duncan for recommending USI's Minka House. Although many of us have walked by or around the house, even peeped in windows, this June we are invited inside to learn more about the Minka concept. Additionally, we will learn strategies for aging in place. Many of us care for others with physical challenges, or face obstacles ourselves. The USI Retiree web page lists many resources for us, but this visit to the Minka House allows us to ask questions of USI's geriatric professionals. Special thanks to Gracie Money, from USI's Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP), for offering us an array of services.



USI Retirees at Mesker Park Zoo and Botanical Garden

Finally, Christy Baker is planning an activity for us on Friday, October 21 at the Evansville Museum where she serves as a docent. Join us!

Warm regards,

Charmaine McDowell

Magic Realism: Recent Works by Michael Aakhus

Several retirees attended the reception for *Magic Realism: Recent Works by Michael Aakhus* on March 4. Michael shared information about his new foray into digital art.



Michael Aakhus speaks with Steve Bridges,
Rosemary Bridges and Judy Morton.



Michael Aakhus, Lenny Dowhie and Dave Hubner

NEW RETIREES

Lorinda Coan
 Joseph DiPietro
 Pamela Doerter
 Paul Doss
 Tamara Hall
 Ramadan Hemaïda
 Madonna Hopf
 David Huebner
 Mary Hupfer
 Margaret Jensen
 Julia Kiesel
 Miles Mann
 Terry McIntosh
 Doris Mohr
 Ronda Priest
 Kathy Riedford
 Joyce Rietman
 Kimberly Rollett
 Julie St. Clair
 Connie Stambush
 Sarah Wannemuehler
 Laurel Wilson

Welcome!**On the Rocks: A USI Connection**

Newly retired Paul Doss stays busy with geology projects and a post-retirement job. Here is an interview with Paul about his new gig.

Did you bartend before?

Never . . . unless you count tapping kegs back in my college days!

What is the appeal of this job? Do you have a special connection to Sara's Wine Bar?

My wife, Heidi, has worked for Historic New Harmony as an Interpretive

Guide for years. We had a tradition of meeting after her work on Thursdays for nice walks along the Wabash. We typically stopped by Sara's for a glass of wine. In March of '25, when we got to Sara's on a Thursday afternoon, there was a piece of paper taped to the bar with a note from Sara: "Paul, Server on Sundays?" Sara knew I was retiring and essentially recruited me to be the Sunday bartender. It sounded like a perfect little retirement gig. Heidi and I love the community and feel a part of it.



Anne-Claire Limon-Lewis and Paul Doss

I've been involved in New Harmony during most of my USI career. New Harmony has a rich geological legacy for the nation, and I had the good fortune to co-author a paper about that legacy. I've led several field

trips and workshops in town focused on New Harmony's history and contributions to the earth sciences, served on USI's Historic New Harmony Task Force in the early 2000s, and worked with the Indiana state geologist on the Granary's seismic station and assessment of earthquake hazards for the region. Also, I had the good fortune to interact with Jane Owen during that time, and I have taken many USI geology students there over the years to learn about the dynamic Wabash River and other important geology topics.

What do you enjoy most about the work? The "vibe" at Sara's is unique . . . quaint, cozy, relaxing (except, maybe, for that damn Sunday bartender!). But most of all I find rewarding the opportunity to interact with the good people of New Harmony and the visitors to town.

- Dr. Anne-Claire Limon-Lewis, USI teaching assistant professor of chemistry and resident of New Harmony, is involved with Science on the Rocks, a series of talks featuring scientists and professors. All are welcome to attend these programs that meet the third Wednesday of

the month, September through April, at Sara's Wine Bar. Additionally, Anne-Claire received an Outreach and Engagement Grant for her project: *From Data to Impact: Harnessing Science for Community Growth in New Harmony, Indiana.*



USI Foundation
8600 University Boulevard
Evansville, Indiana 47712
U-85127-07030 C26-144444

IN MEMORIAM

Edward Marting

Keith Benedict

Michael Truitt

Daniel Scavone

Joyce Noelle

Robert Jeffers

Jane Williams

Julia Yancey

Elizabeth Hagan

Spouse of Joseph Hagan

Rosalinda Hoops

Spouse of Ray Hoops

Fall 2025 Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the USI Retirees was held on Thursday, November 20, 2025 at City View at Sterling Square. Thank you to Jim Bandoli and Ken Goans for once again providing musical entertainment.



Catherine Vaughn, Susie Schmidt and Janet Duncan