

Vintage Times

The semi-annual newsletter of the USI Retirees



Summer/Fall
2025

EVENTS 2025

INAUGURATION OF STEVEN J. BRIDGES October 16, 2025

Liberty Arena, Home of the
Screaming Eagles

USI RETIREES ANNUAL MEETING November 20

City View at Sterling Square

USI BENEFITS EXPO October 30, 2025

9 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
University Center East
2217-2220

COORDINATING COUNCIL 2025 MEETING DATES

November 20

USI RETIREES COORDINATING COUNCIL

Linda Tribble M'03 '08, *President*
Charmaine McDowell, *President-Elect*

Jeri Burger, *Past President*
Christy Baker, *Secretary*
Craig Ehlen, *Treasurer*

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Terri Branson
Janet Duncan
Sandy Hatfield

VINTAGE TIMES

Linda Cleek '82 M'99
Co-Editor
Sherrienne Standley
Co-Editor

Editor's note: This edition of the Vintage Times celebrates the 60th Anniversary of the opening of the University of Southern Indiana, with thanks to those whose vision has grown into the University we know today. Our thanks and appreciation to Sherrienne Standley and Linda Cleek for their hard work and research.

THE BEGINNING.....

Sixty years ago this fall, the University of Southern Indiana opened its doors as an extension campus of Indiana State University. It was a modest beginning, and one sprung by surprise on the Evansville community whose business leaders had been working behind the scenes to bring public higher education to Evansville.



Among our USI Retirees members are those who were there in the first struggling 'Centennial' days and those who came in time for the jubilant celebration 20 years later when USI officially became a full state university. Some have shared memories here.

In 1965, news stories at the time reported that ISU officials were overwhelmed by the first hastily-arranged registration with 412 students waiting to enroll.

Randy Cleek '88, now a Retirees member spouse, was a student in 1968-69 at Centennial, on Indiana Street just off Franklin. The building was leased to ISU by its owner, Mead Johnson Corporation (later Bristol Myers Squibb), Randy remembers that students parked on public streets three to five blocks away. Food came in sacks from Sandy's restaurant, next door, brought to eat in class. Professors sometimes smoked (tobacco cigarettes) atop desktops while lecturing. The air conditioning was a large unscreened window. Pest control consisted of closing the windows. The first student newspaper was called *The Roach*.

After a couple of years, Indiana State hired a Dean for the Evansville Campus, **Dr. David L. Rice**, whose legendary stewardship as a president spanned 23 years. Quickly after, **Bryon Wright** came as Business Office Director, and they began to develop transferable academic programming with the help of **Dr. Donald D. Bennett**, a mathematics teacher who later became Vice President for Student Affairs. Propelled by an intent search for competent people to ensure a sound academic structure for the new enterprise, their efforts were boosted by an

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A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Hello to all members and friends of USI Retirees!

As this year comes to a close, I want to express my deep appreciation to everyone who has worked so diligently on the Coordinating Council. It has been such a pleasure to work with them. If there was a job to do, they did it. If there was an event to plan, they did it; if there was a decision to be made, they made it. In short, they have served our retirees well throughout the year. The events planned over the past year have been well attended. If you were unable to participate, I hope you will try to join in the fun next year. As I write this article, we are planning our Annual Meeting at which time the new Coordinating Council members and Officers for 2026 will take over. I know you will give them the same support you have given me. We love to hear from USI retirees. Many no longer live in the Evansville area, but we hear that they enjoy keeping up with the University and former colleagues. You can always send a message to USI.Retirees@usi.edu. And check out the private group on Facebook. I hope you will take advantage of the opportunities available for USI retirees and their spouses.

All my best,

Linda Tribble, M'03 '08, President,
USI Retirees Coordinating Council

GOVERNOR ORR SIGNS THE BILL

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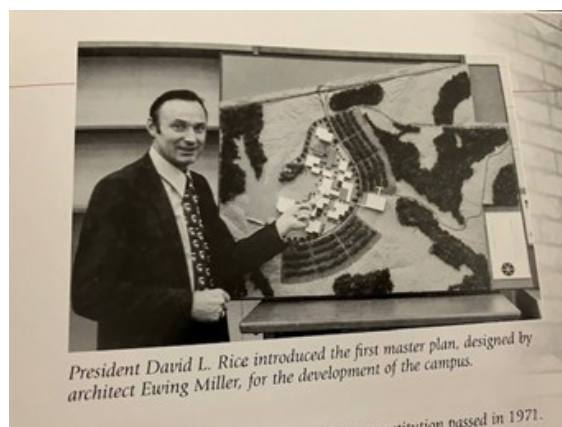
inspired community which raised nearly a million dollars for a 1,400-acre campus a few miles west.

John Deem was teaching accounting at Centennial and was among ten employees who agreed to transfer to the new physical campus when it opened in 1969. He remembers that Dean Rice sent a note of appreciation to each of the ten who had agreed to follow. When a Registrar was needed to record and maintain a campus-based academic record system, Deem accepted the challenge, and kept teaching accounting. He also accepted the challenge to coach, part-time, the first Division II-level men's basketball team, handing it off a few years later when USI officially joined NCAA. Deem served in many capacities and retired as Associate Vice President for Student Affairs. Later, he and **Richard Schmidt**, who retired as Vice President for Business Affairs, oversaw the installation and operation of the first campus-wide computer system for business and academic record-keeping.

It was always the intent of ISU President Alan Rankin to be certain ISUE had the academic and administrative foundation to stand on its own, but a later ISU president had different thoughts.

Enter Governor Robert D. Orr, an Evansville native, who knew that a separate state university would be more responsive to regional needs and provide greater opportunities for economic growth. He convinced the legislature to undertake a careful assessment of ISUE's readiness. It was an intense process overseen by a legislatively mandated "Board of Incorporators."

Sherrienne Standley, who was then Assistant to the President, remembers how she and the late **Judy Goen**, President Rice's administrative assistant, spent precious after-hours time perfecting legislative documents. "There were no desktop word processors. Our best friends were our timely faculty and staff contributors and our IBM self-correcting typewriters. Everyone got the job done."



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NEW RETIREES

Welcome to the employees
who recently retired from the
University.

Kimberly R. Rollett
Lorinda Lipps Coan
Joyce Rietman
Sarah C. Wannemuehler
Connie Stambush
Julie St. Clair
Terry McIntosh
David Huebner
Mary Hupfer
Ronda Priest
Kathy B. Riedford
Pamela S. Doerter
Paul K. Doss
Ramadan S. Hemaïda
Doris J. Mohr
Madonna (Donna) Hopf

STAY CONNECTED!

If you are not receiving
email messages from us,
please send a message
with your preferred
email address to:

USIRetirees@usi.edu

We want to make sure
you are kept informed of
events and information.

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English professor **Dr. Walter Everett**, president of the Faculty Senate in 1985 when USI became a separate state university, remembers driving with President Rice to an Indianapolis meeting about the separation proposal. The legislative committee considering the proposal asked if the faculty were in favor. He truthfully answered that the faculty were fully supportive.



"All the faculty were gratified for full state university status, and for a chance for us to develop the vast possible programs for our resources and for the area. We were proud to say we were faculty," Everett remembers.

On April 16, 1985, Orr came to the campus to sign the bill assuring the dreams of so many would materialize, and recognizing the academic strength that already had provided the region with promise. Governor Orr was met by a standing-room-only cheering crowd of over a thousand faculty, staff, students, and community leaders who had worked to ensure this important transition: a university responsive to regional needs which would provide opportunities for economic growth. On the campus, it took every staff member and many student organizations to produce the "red carpet welcome" given to Governor Orr, the legislators, and state officials who saw the evidence of united community and campus support that day.

After the bill signing, progress began on fulfilling the mission: not only in the classrooms, but also in the community where legislative priorities had been established. The USI faculty and staff have been involved in the community in countless ways throughout 60 years. Retiree **Dr. Robert L. Reid**, who arrived in 1975 as its Vice President for Academic Affairs, could most certainly write several volumes on the involvement of USI faculty and staff with community, government, social services, economic development, and much more. Not only did Dr. Reid oversee the vital accreditation processes in the beginning, he gave informed leadership to the establishment of new articulation and graduate-level programs, which today include doctoral-level study. He also encouraged a wide range of outreach programs in partnership with Retirees **Dr. M. Edward Jones**, who was Vice Provost and Dean for Outreach and Engagement, and Lifelong Learning Executive Director **Linda Cleek**. Both came to USI in 1974.

From that foundation, many USI endeavors enriched the community:

- Labor-Management Education Forum, requested by Governor Orr, and led by the late USI Retirees member and legendary economics teacher

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MEMBERSHIP IN USI RETIREES

Membership in USI Retirees is open to retired employees, spouses and partners and surviving spouses and partners. Employees who separated from the University in good standing with at least 10 years of service but did not meet the eligibility requirements for retirement from USI may join the USI Retirees.

To become an active member or to renew your membership, complete the Retiree Membership Form online at **USI.edu/retirees** and send your information to:

**USI Retirees,
c/o USI Foundation
8600 University Blvd.
Evansville, IN 47712**

Dues are \$20 per year
per person
(July 1 – June 30).

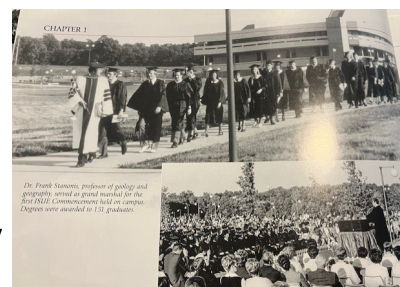
Checks are to be made payable
to **USI Retirees**.

Visit the USI Retirees website at **USI.edu/retirees** for an online payment option or for more information about **USI Retirees**.

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Tim Mahoney. It was so successful in resolving regional labor and management issues that it was no longer needed.

- An economic survey of the region, conducted by USI's **Mohammed Khayum**, became the foundation for new regional business and manufacturing development. The study also later provided evidence for USI to expand its engineering technology program to an accredited baccalaureate engineering program under the leadership of **USI President H. Ray Hoops**.
- USI began cooperative programs with Crane Naval Air Center in Martin County with vision and encouragement by **Dr. Linda Bennett**, Provost and later President of USI.
- Outreach by the Kinney College of Nursing and Health Professions, led by Retiree **Dr. Nadine Coudret**, dean, has supported all aspects of health care in southern Indiana and established new standards of excellence with the addition of master's and doctoral programs.
- At a vital time, leadership in early childhood education was given a boost by Retirees **Ginger Ramsden** from the Center for Education Services and Partnerships, and from **Pam Buschkill** and **Jean Cobb** in the USI Children's Learning Center, who each brought vision to pre-school programming in area day-care centers and assisted them in meeting state and national accreditation standards.
- Connect with Southern Indiana program, led by Retiree **Charmaine McDowell**, director of corporate partnerships, launched in 2006 with funding from the Lilly Endowment. Approximately 180 people from nine southwestern Indiana counties developed 43 projects using networking and critical-thinking skills. Several programs still thrive.
- Retiree **Connie Weinzapfel** bridged historic and preservation groups to bring national attention to Historic New Harmony, which was joined with USI in 1986. History professor and renowned communal studies scholar **Dr. Don Pitzer** has been a treasured partner in the New Harmony preservation and outreach.
- Impressed by USI's deep partnership with the community, **Dr. H. Ray Hoops**, when he came as President, established Volunteer USI within the office of Alumni Engagement, to be managed by Retiree **Nancy Johnson**. The program encourages and recognizes members of the USI family who support campus and community nonprofit endeavors.
- As it should be, many USI initiatives have been absorbed by community groups. USI was a moving force in creating a four-county economic development group, which eventually evolved into Evansville Regional



IN MEMORIAM

Pamela Hurley
Retiree

R. Eugene Klippel
Retiree

Marina 'Reno' Gross
Retiree

Lois Stevens
Retiree

Terry Young
Retiree

Deborah "Debbie" Whiteside
Retiree

Jane Bennett
Wife of founding VP for
Student Affairs, Don Bennett

JOIN THE USI RETIREES FACEBOOK GROUP

Our page is accessible only to USI Retirees. Information about special events and information important to USI Retirees is posted on the page.

If you are on Facebook, search for **USI Retirees** and ask to join the USI Retirees. The USI Retirees Group Facebook Page is growing and we would like to include you!

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Economic Partnership (E-REP), based at Innovation Pointe where USI once hosted a new initiatives incubator.

There are dozens and dozens of Retirees not named here who provided the "backbone" for USI's progress and success. There were staff from all areas who helped to host (and pump up Mid America Singers-style) over a thousand cheering fans for the 1985 bill signing. And for the first on-campus commencement, and the welcome-home celebration for our first NCAA National Basketball Championship, and for all the West Side Nut Club parades featuring USI. In the library, **Rose Scruggs** was the cheerful clerk who steered students to needed resources, and **Carol Schmitt** will forever be everyone's "answer lady" for computer and technical services. And many community members know Retiree **Jerry Bulger**, not as our Maintenance Supervisor who could do "anything," but as the volunteer fire chief who raises the American flag over the USI overpass for every 9/11 Memorial observance. Decades of students never knew the name of **Willie Dortch**, Custodial Worker, who faithfully kept "Laverne the Fern" alive in the Administration hallway. Or the names of the photographers who have documented University progress for sixty years, Or **Jim Werner**, our own Jim EX, speedy "get these documents to the other building fast" mail guy. And USI Retirees member **Mary Lue Russler** founded the longest-running employee organization on campus...helping students with scholarships since 1971! It's what Retirees have done... and employees keep doing...to advance the University.

A University should live its values. At USI, those include elevating educational achievement levels, enriching lives, supporting economic development through education, and investing wisely to boost human achievement. USI Retirees include faculty, administrators, and support staff. Look around at one of our gatherings and notice how many people served many years in many different roles, often growing their careers through increasing their own education. And look at how many of those Retirees believe so deeply in the mission that they continue to volunteer for USI initiatives, investing financial resources and personal talents.

IT IS THE BEST 60TH ANNIVERSARY GIFT EVER!

NEW HARMONY TOUR

Our thanks to Heidi Doss, spouse of retiree **Paul Doss** for a wonderful tour of Historic New Harmony. It was a beautiful day to be out learning more about this 'Utopia.'



‘NOT’ BACK TO SCHOOL LUNCH

As the University community returns to campus for the start of a new semester, USI Retirees celebrate with a lunch at Turoni's Pizzeria on Main Street.



FALL 2025 GRANT RECIPIENTS

Each year, the USI Retirees award eight grants to USI employees seeking their first undergraduate or first graduate degrees. Two undergraduate awards and two graduate awards are given each spring and each fall for a total of eight awards per year. Each grant is for \$150.00. Recipients are selected by random draw, and the only limitation is that a student may not receive an award two semesters in a row. Grants are funded by dues to USI Retirees.

Congratulations to the recipients of the Fall 2025 semester awards:

Graduate Awards

- **Christopher Memmer**, MBA, Service Desk Analyst
- **Mackenzie Schmitt**, MHA, Counseling and Psychological Services Operation and Data Manager

Undergraduate Awards

- **Jaidyn Smith**, BS, International Programs Services Coordinator
- **David Magnuson**, BSE, Lead Maintenance Mechanic

RETIREE EVENTS

Retirees enjoyed a delicious lunch sponsored by the USI Foundation. President Steve Bridges '89 M'95 attended and provided an interesting update on the University.



A beautiful trip to the **Azalea Path and Arboretum** and lunch at R'z Café in Fort Branch was a great way to celebrate Arbor Day...





RETIREEES' ACHIEVEMENTS

Dr. Sherry B. Darrell, professor emerita of English, is author of a new book published by Jennings Street Press. "Speaking Her Peace, Women of Greek Myth in Their Own Voices" reimagines Greek mythology through women's voices -- Helen of Troy, Medusa, and others -- as they share untold stories of love, betrayal, and sacrifice. The book is available on Amazon.

Lenny Dowhie, professor emeritus of art, was featured presenter at an opening gallery reception at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Featured in the Gallery are the works of resident artists of the Blaffer Foundation New Harmony Clay Project, which Dowhie founded and directs. The works will be shown from September 9-December 13.

Matthew Graham, professor emeritus of English and Indiana Poet Laureate Emeritus, has a new book of poetry published by Galileo Press. "The Indiana Series" features poems about writers, artists, musicians, and 'one normal woman' with connections to Indiana. Copies are available in the USI Bookstore and online at Galileo Press.

A decorative image of a field of yellow and red tulips is positioned at the bottom of the page, partially overlapping the text area.