

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
April 26, 2010

125th Anniversary Events

Last week's events celebrating Ferris State University's 125th anniversary were truly memorable. Wednesday evening's 125th Anniversary Concert under the direction of Scott Cohen and Dale Skornia featured the Symphony Band, Community Band, Community Orchestra, and Pep Band. Themed around the history of Ferris, this closed with the world premiere of Harry Dempsey's composition, "Echoes of a River Town." The three-movement work chronicled the development of Ferris Institute, its near destruction in the 1950 fire, and its emergence like a phoenix from this experience. The performance included an accompanying slideshow of photos assembled by Jeff Gabalis of Ferris history through the years as captured in the music. This was a stunning musical tribute to our University and its historical legacy.

"Vignettes into the Life of Woodbridge N. Ferris" written by Professor Emeritus William Keller and performed by students under the direction of Katherine LaPietra, was funny, moving and enlightening. It was my privilege to moderate a Presidential Symposium with Ferris Presidents Robert Ewigleben, Helen Popovich, William Sederburg, Scott Hill-Kennedy, and William Wenrich (via tape recording). It was good to have these colleagues and friends on campus and to hear their reflections on the past and thoughts for the future.

Thursday's 125th birthday celebration dinner at the Holiday Inn was an evening of great entertainment and friendship. Throughout there was entertainment - music, magic, caricature artists, character guests, and balloon artists. The climax of the evening was step show performances, the Lyrical Praise Gospel Choir, and the Pep Band with Cheer Team. It was a fitting finale to a year of celebration that included many wonderful events.

Throughout this year the History Task Force did a great job of planning and helping carry out these events. Special thanks go to co-chairs Mary Kay MacIver and Miles Postema, who were ably assisted by task force members Dan Burcham, Harry Dempsey, Kim Erickson, Mary Gallagher-Eustice, Gary Huey, Geri Johnson, Beth Krueger, Larry Martin, Melinda McMartin Isler, Barry Mehler, Leah Nixon, Karen Simmon and Patty Terryn. I also want to extend my thanks to everyone who assisted with the preparations, events, and supporting materials for the 125th Anniversary Celebration. What follows is a listing of events and people who contributed their time to help them succeed. In providing this I want to apologize in advance for any events or any names omitted here -

Coffee Table Book - Marc Sheehan, Bill Bitzinger, Michelle Herron, Mary Kay MacIver

Faculty and Staff 125th Calendar - Nick Campau, Sherry Hayes, Jim Lindsey, Mary Kay MacIver, Angie Mishler, Al Williams

Wreath Laying at the Ferris Mausoleum - Mary Kay MacIver, Jennifer Thede

Trivia Contest - Mary Kay MacIver, Amy Otteson,

Post Office Cancellation Event - Mary Kay MacIver, Al Williams

Ferris History Panel - Paul Blake, Mary Kay MacIver

125th Geocaching Event - Courtney Borgman, Jim Cook, Jody Gardei, Jennifer Johnson, Mary Kay MacIver, Richard R Saliers, Randall L Schroeder, Randy Shanks, Scott Thede, Jennifer Thede, Lee M Weaver, Stacey A Weaver

Ice Cream Social - Geri Johnson, Miles Postema, and Staff, Governmental Relations & General Council's Office

Vintage Photo Event - Kim Erickson, Karen Kirk, Jim Lindsey, Mary Kay MacIver, Angie Mishler, Al Williams

Unsolved History: the Burning of Old Main - Jim Cook, Geri Johnson, Karen Kirk, Mary Kay MacIver

Helen's Garden Groundbreaking - Kim Erickson, Karen Kirk, Mary Kay MacIver, Carla Miller

"Ferris Through the Years" Photographic Exhibit- Diane Cleland, Harry Dempsey, Jeff Gabalis, Matt Moresi, Karen Simmon, Grant Snider, Carrie Weis

Helen Ferris Panel Discussion - Paul Blake, Andresa Maciejewski

125 Years of Stories - Mary Eustice-Gallagher, Melinda Isler, Mary Kay MacIver, Geri Johnson, and the students of Club History

President's Community Briefing - Shelly Armstrong, Mary Kay MacIver, Ruth Ridderman, John Willey

Reader's Theatre production of "Vignettes into the Life of Woodbridge Ferris by Emeritus Professor William D. Keller - Harry Dempsey, Mary Kay MacIver, Katherine LaPietra, and theater students: Brett Atwood, Jasmine Clark, Brandon Compton, Dwight Desotelle, Tyler Easton, Spencer Flory, Dani Harris, Abby Holmes, Dianna Martin, Elizabeth Murphy, Kate Schwartz, Gerald Smith and Andrew Sweet.

125th Anniversary Band and Orchestra Concert - Scott Cohen, Dale Skornia, Harry Dempsey, Jeff Gabalis

Presidential Symposium - Gretchen Spedowske and the Academic Affairs staff

125th Anniversary Report - Christa Walker, John Willey

125th Birthday Celebration - Beth Krueger and Jennifer Thede, co-chairs, Yolanda Barnes, Brandi Behrenwald, Robert Buckingham, Theresa Foust, Walt Luecke, Theresa Foust, Karen Obermier, Amy Packard, Neil Patten, Gretchen Spedowske

College of Allied Health Sciences reception to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of Ferris and the 30th Anniversary of the Victor F. Spathelf Building - Faculty and staff of the College of Allied Health Sciences

Jazz Band and Choral Concert with returning alumni - Cate Arroe, Harry Dempsey, Matt Moresi, Dale Skornia

125th Time Capsule - Paula Hadley Kennedy, Melinda Isler, Nancy Mettlach, Bill Papo, Piram Prakasam, Brenda Vasicek

This has been an extraordinary celebration, a wonderful opportunity to not only look back at the history of our institution, but also to look forward to what lies ahead in our future. Thank you for assisting, contributing, attending, and helping to make this a very, very special year in the history of our University.

Commencement Stories

It seems difficult to believe but commencement is next week. Do you know a graduating student with an exceptional story? This might include an extraordinary achievement or accomplishment, overcoming significant challenges, or making exceptional contributions while a student. If so please share it with me. I very much enjoy the opportunity to visit with these students. Some student stories I highlight during commencement exercises, and others I share in meetings with alumni, legislators, donors and others. If you know of a noteworthy graduate, please e-mail me at eislerd@ferris.edu or call our office at extension 2500. Thank you!

Pancakes with the President

As exam week begins, we will be hosting “Pancakes with the President” on Monday, May 3, starting at 11 pm. in the Westview Dining Center. This is an opportunity for Ferris students to take a break from studying to relax and meet informally with members of the University community. If you have participated in the past, you know this is a good opportunity to interact with students as the academic year draws to a close. All members of the campus community are invited to assist. Please contact Elaine Kamptner at ext. 2500 if you would like to join us.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, President