

Decades Dash and birthday celebration highlight SIUE MUC anniversary

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EDWARDSVILLE - The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Morris University Center (MUC) is celebrating 50 years as the hub of student life and community engagement on campus.

March 20-24, SIUE students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members enjoyed special offers and participated in a slew of engaging events held in celebration of the MUC's rich social, recreational, cultural, educational and developmental impact.



More than 150 participants traveled through time during the Decades Dash on Wednesday, March 22. Racers and walkers donned tie-dye, '80s attire and more as they dashed through the themed 5K route.

Glen Carbon's Jorge Garcia, an SIUE School of Business alumnus, took first place in the men's division. Charlie Gentemann, an 11-year-old from Marine, grabbed the second place spot.

Ann Koyle, also of Glen Carbon, ran first in the women's division, with Edwardsville's Erica Hunt runnerup.



SIUE Chancellor Randy Pembroke kicked off the MUC birthday party on Thursday, March 23 in the Goshen Lounge, with a trip down memory lane, as he highlighted the building's many functions.

“If the MUC is 50, that means I met the MUC when it was 9 years old,” the alumnus recalled. “Through the years, the Goshen Lounge has been an ice skating rink, the “Goshen Ocean” filled with a sand volleyball court, a wedding location, art gallery and a bull-riding space. It has also played host to a number of musical performances.”

He went on to engage the audience in a round of trivia about well-known figures who have visited the center, such as the late legendary American author and poet Maya

Angelou, one of the most respected leaders in American history General Colin Powell, former President Barack Obama, while serving as an Illinois senator, and Leonard Nimoy, of Star Trek.

Other speakers included Student Body President Luke Jansen and Alumni Association Board Member Ric Stephenson.

“The MUC has played a highly important role in my time at SIUE, and I know many of my peers would say the same,” Jansen said. “This is where I got involved and found my place at the University. The MUC is much more than a building. It is a place where people come together. It is the heart and soul of campus.”

Stephenson was one of the first five individuals to register for classes at the University in 1965. He recalled his “joyful experiences” at SIUE and how he watched the campus grow.

“Our eyes were focused on the opening of this building,” he said. “When it opened in 1967, we couldn’t have been happier, because it became our home away from home.”

Stephenson earned a bachelor’s in government in 1970, a master’s in counselor education/school counseling in 1975 and an education specialist degree in 1977, all from SIUE.



To current students, he said, “When we come back to celebrate the 100th anniversary, I hope you can also reflect on the wonderful experiences that you had and take pride in this building.”

Jeffrey Waple, PhD, vice chancellor for Student Affairs, shared updates that have been made to the MUC’s equipment and processes, and detailed plans for future additions and student offerings.

“Architects are currently redesigning some options for us that we can share with people in the fall,” said Waple. “We want to expand the building and make some exciting changes to meet the current needs of our students.”

The celebration concluded with a boisterous round of Happy Birthday, delicious cupcakes and a decades-themed candy bar.

[Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](#) provides students with a high quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose to shape a changing world. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River’s rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis, the SIUE campus is home to a diverse student body of more than 14,000.