

# Dedication to Emeritus Professor enhances picturesque SIU SDM Campus

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ALTON - An emeritus professor of the Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine (SIU SDM), known for his significant contributions to teaching, professional development and leadership, and devoted support of campus beautification efforts, now has a scenic dedication settled in front of one of the unique campus's historic buildings.

The family of Dr. David Jenkins, with the support of SIU SDM Dean Bruce Rotter, DMD, and Director of Development Stephen Schaus, surprised their father with an engraved granite stone and a bench during a dedication ceremony held April 11. His children Ben Jenkins, of San Diego, Kathie Kreuger, of Oakville, Mo., and Tim Jenkins, of Edwardsville, spearheaded the effort and coordinated the surprise.

"We are proud to make this a reality, because for our family, this represents what dad was about," said Ben Jenkins, Dr. Jenkins' oldest son. "This building was where he spent a lot of his time teaching during his 27 years here. He truly made an impact on his students. He also is passionate about landscaping, so this will be a beautiful gathering place for students, faculty and visitors for years to come."

Dr. Jenkins was a faculty member at the SIU SDM from 1984-2011. He retired as chair of the Department of Growth, Development and Structure, and associate professor in the section of anatomy. He left an indelible mark on the lives of students, faculty, staff and administrators with whom he interacted, and on the campus itself.

"Those who know Dr. Jenkins, realize that he was an outstanding faculty member at the School," said Rotter. "However, many do not know that among the many good things Dr. Jenkins contributed to the campus community, he also spearheaded a campus beautification effort. He is largely credited for the attractive appearance that the Alton campus enjoys today. For this reason, the installation of a landscape feature in honor of Dr. Jenkins seems especially appropriate."

“This was quite the surprise and honor, and I greatly appreciate it,” said Dr. Jenkins. “It’s incredible to feel like I’m still part of the campus and there is a remembrance of me. Knowing my family was involved with this is extremely meaningful.”

After the ceremony, Dr. Jenkins recalled his fondness for the SIU SDM, describing its campus as picturesque and unique in its strong dedication to students.

“We came here in 1984, and it was the perfect fit,” Dr. Jenkins said. “It was a place where students were extremely important and faculty could focus on education and research which involved students. Unlike most dental schools in the country, it is unique in that it has its own historic campus. I enjoyed contributing to the beautification and rejuvenation of the campus during my time at the School.”

Dr. Jenkins spent years leading a fundraising campaign, volunteering his time and putting in hard labor, along with students and fellow faculty members, to beautify the Alton campus. Along with landscaping efforts, he is also credited with renovating the door that serves as the main entrance to the former administration building at the center of campus. It transformed the setting to create a warm welcome for campus and community members.

“Our dad is passionate about representing this University, and having students enroll and be proud of where they’re studying,” Ben explained. “We all know how hard he worked and how dedicated he was to the school. We hope this dedication stone and bench will foster the continued evolution of the campus, and offer people a beautiful place to rest and take in the world.”

“The people at the dental school were such a wonderful group to work with, including the staff, administration, faculty and students,” Dr. Jenkins said. “It was enjoyable to be involved in that type of atmosphere and with those people. It couldn’t have been a better place to be for those 27 years.”

“People here have done a nice job of continuing to improve the campus and make it a beautiful place to be. I know the School of Dental Medicine will continue to flourish. It’s one of the best in the country.”

[The SIU School of Dental Medicine](#) students manage approximately 35,000 patient visits each year at its patient clinics in Alton and East St. Louis. In addition, students offer oral health treatment, screenings and education to more than 10,000 people annually through a wide variety of off-campus community outreach events. These

opportunities provide students the training they need to graduate and become highly skilled dentists. The School of Dental Medicine is a vital oral health care provider for residents of southern and central Illinois, and the St. Louis metropolitan region.