

SIUE School of Pharmacy hosts special all-alumni anniversary gala

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EDWARDSVILLE - The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Pharmacy (SOP) paid tribute to the extraordinary impact of retiring Director of Student Services Connie Stamper-Carr and honored former Dean Gireesh Gupchup, PhD, at the first

Special All-Alumni & Friends Anniversary Gala held Saturday, July 14 at the Hilton St. Louis at the Ballpark.

The gala's approximately 130 attendees included alumni, current students, faculty, staff, members of the Pharmacy Advisory Board and friends.

"We are overjoyed with the gala's success," said planning committee co-chair Maggie Krumwiede, PharmD '09. "Many individuals were able to show their love and support for Connie. She has been a vital part of the School's success, and touched the lives of students, alumni and even parents at such an important stage in our lives."

"I love seeing students discover the profession of pharmacy and find their place" Stamper-Carr said. "Being a student is noble. It's the notion that you don't know everything, and that you are willing to work toward the goal of knowing more about the subjects you study. Pharmacy students represent the best characteristics of lifelong learners."

In April 2017, nine SOP alumni formed a planning committee to conduct the "Campaign 4 Connie" (C4C) to raise the funds needed to establish an endowed scholarship in Stamper-Carr's honor. They also planned the special all-alumni and friends gala and reunion to formally recognize her and dedicate her scholarship.

"The C4C planning committee worked tirelessly for more than a year to successfully raise \$28,000 for the scholarship, and provide an iconic, unforgettable experience for the entire School of Pharmacy community," said Senior Director of Development Patti McDonald.

Gala highlights included a meaningful program honoring Stamper-Carr's retirement, Gupchup's influential tenure as dean, the School's 10 graduating classes and the Class of 2013's five-year university, as well as entertainment by the SIUE Jazz Ensemble and a DJ from Millennium Productions that was sponsored by the SIUE Alumni Association.

"Gireesh lives and breathes for the success of the SIUE School of Pharmacy," Krumwiede said. "He has taken such great care, and gone to great lengths to ensure each individual within the School feels welcome and feels that they, too, have contributed to the School's success."

"Both Connie and Gireesh tirelessly devoted themselves to the betterment of the School and the well-being of the students, faculty, staff and alumni," added planning committee co-chair Kelly Kleeman, PharmD '09. "We could not be happier that so many came together to celebrate the legacy created by these two exemplary individuals."

Interim Dean Mark Luer, PharmD, also extended his best wishes and gratitude to Stamper-Carr and Gupchup. “Since you became dean, Gireesh, we faced numerous budgetary hurdles, and yet the students, faculty and staff succeeded while programs grew. Your selfless leadership style cultivated major milestones, and for that we will forever be grateful.”

“And, Connie,” Luer added. “I saw you skillfully blend a caring heart with an intelligent mind, and from that I hope to have learned. Your impact on us is indelible.”

Alumni Council President Harry Zollars, PharmD ’13, recognized the work of alumni in making the gala possible. He says one big idea turned into an incredible evening of celebration.

“The whole night, the scholarship in Connie’s name, commemorating Gireesh’s legacy, celebrating our future with Interim Dean Luer, was started and carried by the work of alumni who reached out to the School and were determined to make a difference,” Zollars explained. “I’m extremely proud of the work everyone put into the gala and weekend events, and am excited for what our bright futures as alumni and the School will bring.”

“I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to give back to a program that gave so much to me and my fellow alumni,” Krumwiede added. “The SIUE School of Pharmacy prepared me to be the best pharmacist I can be, and I owe an incredible amount to the amazing faculty and staff who molded me. I look forward to seeing what the next 10 graduating classes will accomplish. I am confident the School will continue to excel and be a game-changer in the world of pharmacy.”

The SOP has nearly 750 alumni spanning the region, nation and globe. Each of the SOP’s classes has scored above average on the state licensure exam and most have scored above average on the national licensure exam (NAPLEX).

The Class of 2017’s first-attempt board pass rate was the highest of any program in Illinois or Missouri. The NAPLEX results place SIUE in the top 30 percent of all pharmacy programs in the country.

[SIUE School of Pharmacy](#): Today’s pharmacists improve patients’ lives through the medication and education they provide. Dedicated to developing a community of caring pharmacists, the SIUE School of Pharmacy curriculum is nationally recognized as a model that offers students a unique combination of classroom education, research, community service and patient care. The School of Pharmacy’s areas of excellence include a drug design and discovery core; pediatric practice; chronic pain research and practice; and diabetes research and practice. As the only downstate Illinois pharmacy

doctorate program, the SIUE School of Pharmacy is addressing the growing need for highly trained pharmacists in a rapidly growing field.