

SIUE East St. Louis Center for the Performing Arts Proudly Rings Out the National Anthem at Basketball Game

by Megan Wieser

February 17 2022 9:52 AM



EDWARDSVILLE - “The Star-Spangled Banner,” performed Saturday, Feb. 12 at the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Cougar’s Men’s basketball game, had a special ring to it thanks to the SIUE East St. Louis Center for Performing Arts chimes choir, led by Mary Jo Pembroke, PhD, piano and chimes instructor.

The chimes choir, joined by SIUE students Joshua Freund, Taylor Smith and Jerome Ukah; SIUE alumna Ana Cecelia Villegas; and SIUE Chancellor Randy Pembroke, performed the national anthem prior to the 3:30 p.m. game at the Vadalabene Center’s First Community Arena.

“It was a great opportunity for our students to showcase their musical ability,” said Mary Jo Pembrook. “It was equally wonderful for the SIUE community to see, hear and appreciate our talented students.”

“The students, along with their accompaniment, did a fantastic job,” said Homer Simmons, Performing Arts director. “This was not our first performance at a Cougar ballgame, and we hope to have many more opportunities.”

Students performing, ranging in age from 6-16, included:

- Greyson Coates
- Jason Coates
- Meadow Coates
- Kacien Fields
- Aunya Lee
- Donteaus Lee
- Gabby Mitchell
- Gavin Mitchell
- Auset Wilson
- Ya'Asantewa Wilson
- Jarri Winters
- Javonni Winters

The [SIUE East St. Louis Center for the Performing Arts](#) has a long, rich history. The legendary dancer, anthropologist, and social activist Katherine Dunham founded the Center for Performing Arts at the SIUE East St. Louis Center in 1964. At its peak in the 1990s, the East St. Louis Center for the Performing Arts provided year-round instruction to more than 1,000 youth and became a training ground for professional artists of all disciplines. For decades, the East St. Louis Center for the Performing Arts provided performing arts classes to students and community members to develop local talent and to cultivate a love of the arts. Classes often culminated in musical and theatrical productions.

With a focus on empowering people and strengthening communities, the [SIUE East St. Louis Center](#) is dedicated to improving the lives of families and individuals - from pre-school through adult - in the Metro East. Head Start/Early Head Start and a charter high school are among the programs that offer the community renewed hope and an opportunity to reach educational, career and life goals. The Center also assigns first priority to encouraging, supporting and improving the educational success of the

residents of East St. Louis and surrounding urban communities. The Center provides comprehensive programs, services and training in the areas of education, health, social services and the arts.