



2022  SIUE  
*Golden*  
GRADUATES  
  
*50th Reunion*

**The following pages contain notes and words of wisdom from some of the 2022 Golden Graduates. Thank you to those who provided responses.**

**We hope you enjoy reading about the accomplishments of your classmates as part of your SIUE Golden Graduation Reunion.**



# **Carol A. Brooks '68**

**Hometown:** Lookout Mountain, GA

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Retired

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Driving through the corn field to get to the campus.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Being a mother.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Stay true to your own desires.



# Gary Bullard '78 '82

**Hometown:** Edwardsville, IL

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Special Education Teacher, Canyons School District, Midvale, Utah



**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

The most memorable thought as a student at SIUE was picking up my graduation ring at the bookstore on campus.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

My career included being a Special Education Asst. Director; I served 4 yrs. In the Navy; My teaching career spanned 37 yrs.; Copyrighted 28 original Gospel, Country, and Folk songs; Been married to my wife for 48 yrs. who is also a SIUE graduate. We have an awesome family with daughters, grandchildren, and a great granddaughter; Served with my wife for 1 1/2 yrs on a Service Mission with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Be lifelong learners and enjoy every part of your journey!

# **Wanda Bullard '71 '75**

**Hometown:** Rosewood Heights, IL

## **Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

I retired in 2015 from my teaching career.

Kindergarten teacher, Washington Elementary School,  
Salt Lake City, Utah

## **Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

My fondest memory as an SIUE student was attending my first college class on my first day of college!

## **Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Became a life long learner and that began at SIUE; Sought truth and found it and the greatest experience with that was becoming a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in 1998; Enjoyed a long teaching career and made lifelong connections with amazing people; Married an amazing man (Navy veteran and SIUE graduate) and enjoyed all the pleasures and challenges of raising children together; Traveled throughout the United States and Canada; Learned how to use a computer, cell phone, printer, play a guitar, facebook, twitter and ride a horse; I can do hard things and never give up; My family, friends and neighbors know that I would reach out and help them and serve in anyway to make their life easier; I am happy and I have helped others to be happy.

## **What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Be a lifelong learner, seek and find truth AND never give up!!

Serve others and be good to yourself!



# John Carenza '72

**Hometown:** St. Louis, MO

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Sr. Financial Analyst, Nicol Financial Services

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Met my best friend and spouse of 50 years at SIUE;  
U.S. Olympian / Munich

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Married 50 years

1972 USA Olympic games



# Donald Clay '67 '72

**Hometown:** St. Louis, MO; currently reside in Gilbert, AZ

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

I have served as the Regional Chief Architect and the Acting Housing Director for the Dept. of HUD in Kansas City region. Following my retirement and relocation to Gilbert AZ I was appointed to the Architectural design review board.

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

My memories are the relationships that developed with my graduate classmates and Professors which evolved into a lasting friendship that I will cherish for the rest of my professional life

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Besides my family, graduating from SIUE and the University of Kansas and accomplishing my professional goal of becoming an Architect

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Follow your dream.



# Greg Cohill '72 '76

**Hometown:** Collinsville, IL

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

I was a music director in the Alton School System and currently free lance playing and teaching privately mostly advanced level high school and college students in the Springfield, Illinois area.

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

MRF, the lake, Being a student in the Music DEpartment4 and being able to participate in all the concerts and musical events they hosted. A wonderful experience and would do it again if I had to do it all over. And I just have to mention, being able to celebrate this Graduation event on my 75th birthday!

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

That I can still play as I did as an SIUE student but only better now.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Keep yourself on track and focused on what you want to do with your life and pattern your coursework to compliment those goals. Don't let all the fun and games take a priority. Always stay focused on your goals, coursework, and why you are going to SIUE.





# Gloria Davis '71

**Hometown:** St. Louis, MO

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Superintendent of Schools Decatur IL. I am currently retired and work with superintendents conducting Educational Coaching and conduct superintendent searches for GR Recruiting Search Firm.



**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Lovejoy Library and Mississippi River Festival. I also very much appreciated the care that professors extended to me as a student.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

My proudest moment was passing a county wide bond referendum in Decatur IL-Macon County IL for 76 Million dollars for the first time. People said it could not be done and told me as superintendent I was not going to win. And we Did It for the students!!

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Be true to your beliefs; set high goals and aspirations and let nothing stop You!

# Steve Dietrich '72

**Hometown:** Columbia, IL

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Senior Consultant with Ashland Group in Houston, TX

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Graduation.



# Dr. Lois Erickson '71

**Hometown:** Crossville, TN

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Psychotherapist. Agencies/Private

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Mississippi River Festival

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Completing Dissertation, Director College Counseling Center,  
Director Student Development, Retirement!!! Traveling the world.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Persist, keep your eyes on your goals, maintain your sense of humor!!!



# **Dr. David Erwin '72 '74**

**Hometown:** Alton, IL

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Retired from Veterans Administration

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

New campus and buildings!

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

My degrees and my three children.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Stay in school as long as possible.



# Jeanne Goestenkers '72

**Hometown:** Aviston, IL

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

I retired from GTE of California as a Business Planning Mgr.

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

I worked for the university (Graphics & Publications) while I earned my MBA & had an office in one of the off campus farm houses. I was able to integrate my work & school life perfectly because I used my office to work & study.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

My final project at GTE was coordinating the merger of GTE of the Northwest with Contel's Northwest company. There were lots of moving parts & employees responsible for different functions, but it went off perfectly.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Follow your strengths, do something worthwhile that contributes positively to you own life & the broader world.



# Valerie Goodapple-Sloka '72



## **Hometown:**

I have lived in seven states over the past 50 years. I made them all my home. I am moving to Pensacola, Florida in the Fall.

## **Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

I write grants for health care projects with my son, Alexander, in our own business. I will be a consultant for a demonstration project working with people who age out of the foster care system at 18. We will implement and evaluate interventions to see which are most effective in helping them achieve a successful life and their goals.

## **Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

I remember going out with my friends from the nursing program after passing our exams, and learning new skills in our clinical rotations.

## **Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

I homeschooled my only child for grade school and most of high school; The work I did as a nurse made a difference for a lot of people. I believe everyone can be the hands of God in action; I taught Community Health Nursing at Arizona State University; I was a consultant on a federal children's health programs and for Indian Health; I was elected to our county Board of Health; I was on several boards; I started a Parish Nurse program and was a medical missionary for a couple of weeks for Indians in Mexico.

## **What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Use your talents. Plan your career and life. Progress on your path. Invest 20% of all your income in things that create passive income, ex. dividend stocks, rental real estate, equity index universal life insurance. That gives you more choices in career and life. Volunteer and share your skills. You will benefit as much as those you help. Acknowledge those that contributed to giving you a strong foundation to build on, for me, it was my grandparents. I am grateful for them and truly miss them. Choose to have a great life. Thank God. Love your children. Life is long, follow your dreams. You are blessed.

# Kendra Grout '72 '74

**Hometown:** Belleville, IL

## **Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

I am retired now. I taught 35 years mostly in first grade at Freeburg Elementary School, retired 4 years, was asked to come back to Freeburg District #70 to be the RTI facilitator which I did for 9 more years, which had me with the district 43 years.

## **Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

I truly enjoyed every one of Dr. Comer's class. Also, I was doing reading clinic work at the university to prepare me for a reading interventionist job and I actually taught a grown adult man to read.

## **Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

I received the Emerson For Excellence in Teaching award in 2002, I wrote and received 11 grants for the school district. I received The Special School Award in 2019 for generous service to Community consolidated school District 70. I helped our district receive the best 100 school award. I have watched multitudes of my former students produce amazing accomplishments, knowing I had a hand in their future.

## **What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

You have been given the tools by the great professors at this school to be successful. It is your job to do something remarkable with them. Try things while you still can. It's okay to make mistakes, but own up to them. Learn from them. College graduation advice isn't one-size-fits all. Do what works for you.



# David Hager '72

**Hometown:** Neenah, WI

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Retired from The University of Wisconsin System as a Director of University Relations (Marketing & Communications); Have been active in retirement as a Lambeau Field Tour Guide for The Green Bay Packers; as an usher for the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers (minor league baseball team) and as a customer service rep for the Experimental Aviation Association.



**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Being one of the first Resident Managers at the then-new Tower Lake on-campus student housing complex; Attending concerts by world-class performers at the Mississippi River Festival.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Being happily married to the same amazing person for 53 years, being a father & grandfather; Enjoyed successful careers in higher education administration & corporate management; Completed numerous full (running) marathons, triathlons, duathlons & long-distance bike tours; As a volunteer, served as a member of the Board of Directors for numerous community not-for-profit organizations; As a community citizen, I contributed a monthly newspaper column about fitness & wellness and also wrote & recorded a monthly broadcast radio editorial focused on a relevant topic of my choosing.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2021?**

Be flexible, learn to adapt & make good decisions.



# Kathy Hager '72

**Hometown:** Neenah, WI

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

I was an elementary teacher for Neenah Schools.

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Living in married housing at Tower Lake; Attending MRF

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Happily married to the same person for over 50 years, being a mother, a grandmother, and teaching in the elementary grades. Recipient of the Wisconsin Excellence in Teaching Economics Award.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Follow your dreams! There's no expiration date.



# Barbara Hall-Ridenour '72

**Hometown:** Chicago, IL

## **Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Retired from Cecil County Public Schools as an SLP in Maryland.

## **Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Playing "Hearts" in the cafeteria. Watching thousands of birds migrating for hours at a time while studying in one of Lovejoy Library's egg chairs. Dances and theatre programs. Exploring out of the way spaces around campus & in buildings. Mississippi River Festival concerts. Working in the Reserve Department at Lovejoy. Anti-war protests and sit-ins. Falling in love for the first time.

## **Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Married 51 yrs with an amazing daughter. Founding a multi-faceted volunteer tutoring and mentoring programs for school districts. Being one of the first Educational Diagnosticians/Therapists in the country under a Federal grant in an experimental unit in Dayton Public Schools. Establishing a Volunteer ESL and GED tutoring program for Liberian refugees as part of a family adoption program in greater Baltimore, MD. Camp Amazing Grace" Counselor for children of incarcerated parents. Avocation: church choral music director handbell choir director and singing in various community and church choirs. Co-producer of cable tv program "Experiencing the Arts" (visual & performing arts). Neighborhood Arts program. Private practice specialist in Neurologic Language and Learning Disorders. "Imerman Angels" mentor for breast cancer patients. Continuing my love of athletics. Volunteer work for Environmental issues and Civil Rights for over 50 yrs.

## **What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Follow your passions and values with conviction and conscience.



# **Karol Harris '72 '81 '86**

**Hometown:** Belleville, IL

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Retired from Teaching 31 years at Belle Valley

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Too many to write down.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Emerson Master Teacher Award

Having taught over 4,000 students over my career

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Learn how to work.



# Vickie Hanvey-Ballard '72

**Hometown:** Belleville, IL

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Quality Health Network; retired 2014

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Being a part of the new University environment.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Director of a new for-profit outpatient clinical reference laboratory.

Director of Operations for Quality Health Network; one of the first regional health information networks in the United States.

Wife of 52 years, mother of two children and grandmother of four.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Keep an open mind. Do not let the media sway your beliefs and thoughts.



# Steve Holt ' 72

**Hometown:** Highland, IL

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Working with my journalism teacher, Harry Thiel.

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Affiliated with most area weekly and daily newspapers (including Highland News Leader, Belleville News-Democrat, St. Louis Post-Dispatch and Suburban Journals) throughout my newspaper career. Also owned the Bond and Fayette County Shopper.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

53-year marriage, 3 children, 6 grandchildren, a great-grandson and earning a good living before the newspaper industry collapsed.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Never pass up an opportunity to learn.



# Richard Jones '72

**Hometown:** Fairview Heights, IL

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Getting an excellent music education.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Becoming a professional musician.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Pursue your goals and they will happen.



# Karen Kearns '72 '74

**Hometown:** Los Angeles, CA

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Associate Dean College of Arts Media and  
Communication/ California State University Northridge

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Mississippi River Festival

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Working as a producer at NPR and winning a Peabody Award.  
WSIE and WHA prepared me for this work.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Follow your dreams and pursue a job that supports those dreams



# **Dr. Courtland Koblitz '72 '75 '85**

**Hometown:** Caseyville, IL

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Adjunct Professor at SLU and Webster University

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Special Dean's College program (French immersion with Dr. Gertrude Marti)

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Teaching multiage classrooms in the Clayton School District

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Discover your passion and follow it.





# Sharon Harrison '72 '73

**Hometown:** Norman, OK

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Educational Diagnostician, Sherman Texas ISD.

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Getting to be the first family in the new 3 bedroom apartment built for married student housing is one of my fondest memories.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

I am proudest of all the students who pursued and succeeded reaching career goals.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Become a life long learner. Life zooms by, but it is more beautiful if you stay involved and make time for yourself to keep reading and learning.



# Michael Kovarik '70 '74

**Hometown:** Edwardsville, IL

## **Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

I am retired from Teaching in the Collinsville School District after 34 years at North Junior High School and Webster Junior High School. At present, I am sexton and President of Buck Road Cemetery in Maryville, Illinois. I have been doing this work since 1983 and plan to continue in this position until...yes until!



## **Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

I was given the opportunity to work in a number of venues while a student: the research department in Lovejoy Library coincided nicely with my History and Social Studies Bachelor degree. I also had the opportunity to work in the Geography Department, which also fit nicely into my degree program.

## **Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

My wife, Linda, and I have been married going on 52 years (high school sweethearts). We have 3 wonderful children, 6 grandchildren and now our first great granddaughter. I am most proud of my teaching career. Though I am not in the classroom, I am still a teacher at heart. That is one of my passions. Another is my work as President and sexton of the Cemetery. It allows me to assist families and friends in a most difficult time. I take this responsibility quite seriously.

## **What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Find your passion. Follow your dream. When you find the career, profession, opportunities, that give you your greatest satisfaction, it is not work. It is never work. It is living life to the fullest. Read everything you can. Study everything you can. Write your memories to share with family and friends. Share a recipe. Share your life with that one special person that without her, there is a hole in your life. With her, your life is complete. What is your most valuable asset? TIME! Share your life with those you love and cherish.

# Dr. Jim Kreher '72

**Hometown:** Smithton, IL

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

29 years as a Podiatrist. Retired in 2005

Retired from teaching in 2010

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

I worked my way through school at SIUE.

Loved going to the Dining Hall in the Student Center.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

teaching at McKendree and SWIC, especially with tutoring students

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Show up for work every day and be on time. Do your job correctly.



# James Krieger '72

**Hometown:** Edwardsville, IL

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Kroger Food Stores, Inventory Control Manager.

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

LIFT program at Pie Town Tech

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Being at a corporation headquarters.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Work hard, play hard, retire early.



# John Lanzerotte '72

**Hometown:** Gillespie, IL

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**  
Superintendent of Monterey Coal Mine  
in Carlinville, IL

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Discussions about current events happening in the late 1960's.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

My proudest accomplishment has been having a great family and a successful business career.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Be an adult. Accept responsibility, and put life choices in the right perspective.



# **Bennie Martin '71**

**Hometown:** Carrollton, MO

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**  
Computer Programmer/System Analyst  
for the Defense Mapping Agency

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**  
Utilizing the library at SIUE.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**  
Community Service Volunteer

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**  
Pursue a career you enjoy and be of service to others.



# Francis Meravy '72

**Hometown:** Fairview Heights, IL

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Retired now - former Fiscal Officer for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

The beautiful campus and facilities

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Spending over 40 successful years in the Accounting field thanks to my degree from SIUE.



# Dr. David Merello '72

**Hometown:** Hazelwood, MO

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**  
General Dentist at my two dental offices  
in the Kansas City area. Retired in 2017.

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**  
Attending the Mississippi River Festival, and  
seeing my favorite bands of the time, such as  
Yes, Blood Sweat & Tears, and Chicago.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**  
Attending SIUE from 1968-1972, and graduating with a major in biology & minor  
in chemistry, and acceptance into UMKC Dental School. Marrying the love of my  
life in 1978, and having three beautiful children.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**  
Life isn't determined by what you want.  
Life is determined by the choices you make.





# Donna Mitten '70 '74

**Hometown:** Davis, CA

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Retired as Research Scientist.

Employed by Monsanto and Bayer.

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Being supported by the science facility and helping to organize Earth Day, the first one celebrated!

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Being part of a team who applied advanced genetics to agriculture

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Everything you learn will find a useful role in your life.



# Timothy Murphy '72 '75

**Hometown:** St. Peters, MO

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Retired from Metro Transit (Bi-State Development Agency)  
as Manager, Labor Relations in November 2019.

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Attending classes at the Alton Lift Program.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Forty-nine years of marriage with four successful sons  
and six grandchildren.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Don't be in a hurry to accomplish your goals.



# Patricia Quinn-Buchta '70

**Hometown:** Saint Helen, MI

## **Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Retired. Associate professor of nursing at Schoolcraft College in Livonia Michigan. Nurse manager Beaumont Farmington Hills Michigan where I worked simultaneously with the college for over 40 years.

## **Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

The meeting of many new people and becoming friends and roommates. The great support for our shared learning experiences. The long nights studying for tests together.

## **Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Teaching young nursing students then seeing them flourish when they were at the same hospital I was at.

## **What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

You have a great foundation grow from there into the leaders and teachers of the future. The sky is the limit for you. Don't be afraid to make a change.



# Elaine Roche '72

**Hometown:** Sea Cliff, NY

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

I enjoyed two wonderful careers: I was a university librarian at the University of Cincinnati and later at SUNY Buffalo. Then we moved to California, where I was an executive in marketing and finance positions at Sun Microsystems.



**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Lovejoy Library where I worked for Millicent C. Palmer; The English Dept. faculty, especially Dr. Dan Havens, Dr. Stella Revard, and Dr. Gertrude Drake. Time with friends between classes in the cafeteria.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

My family, education, careers, and sailing adventures.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Embrace change and follow your passion.

# Dr. Eric Schlechte '72 '75

**Hometown:** Belleville, IL

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

General dentist in private practice for 43 years until retirement in 2018

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

My fondest memory is working for Dr. Henry Firsching as a research assistant in his chemistry lab.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

I enjoyed the personal relationships formed with my patients over the years, and building a dental practice with my wife, Dr. Katherine Heilig.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Always give your best effort in what you hope to accomplish!



# Kenneth Schneider '72

**Hometown:** East St. Louis, IL

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

District Manager for Dollar general; Manager of The Fresh Market. Also after I retired I worked for the Cincinnati Reds

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Free Speech

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Loving retirement and currently living in Florida.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2021?**

Your degree is only that. The most important thing is that it teaches you to think and make decisions on your own.



# Barbara Schneider-Takacs '72

**Hometown:** Alton, IL

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Most recent position: SEC registered representative working for State Farm Mutual Funds as a quality specialist.

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Math instructor approached me to ask if I would be his TA. Unfortunately, I would not be able as I would be student teaching and then graduating. Feeling so at home while on campus especially with my Gamma Sigma Sigma Sorority sisters, working for the Bursar's Office and Food Service, giving campus tours and assisting with new student orientation.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

I am most proud of having a family and seeing my children grow into successful adults with children of their own. Having a granddaughter graduating from SIUE, 50 years after I did. Feeling that I may have made a positive contribution to the lives of my students.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Dream big, live wisely, make a positive difference, be kind and never forget how much you have to offer the world. Do not be afraid to try, even if you fail, as failure is a learning experience that provides greater success for your next opportunity.



# Ernest Stephens '69 '73

**Hometown:** Paris, IL

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

School Psychologist @ Special Education District of McHenry.  
SEDOM served 18 cooperating school districts in McHenry County, a collar county to the Chicago Metro Area.

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Working with Students, as a Resident Manager in Housing, this perhaps provided the largest source of gratification outside of course work.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

36 years of service to challenged students from 3 to 21 years of age. (Specifically Autistic, Severe/Profound Impairments,, Medically Fragile, and Behavioral / Emotionally Challenged.); School Practitioner of the Year - 1984 (by the Illinois School Psychological Association- ISPA); President of Association of Special Education Personnel -(ASEP) 2000 - 2004; Elected Representative to the National Education Association Representative Assembly (NEA) 2001-2005 (Chicago,Los Angeles, Washington, DC, Dallas, & Orlando)

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

May I suggest that you Seek the answers to: "Who am I?", "What am I doing here?", "Where am I going ?"  
Along the way, Find your special gift, develop it, and return it to the community. And then.. Good judgement is the relevant use of information, but Wisdom is the relevant use of experience.





# **Ric Stephenson '70 '75 '77**

**Hometown:** Edwardsville, IL

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Retired as a Regional Director with the Illinois Education Association.

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

I loved helping to lay the foundation upon which one classroom building evolved into six campus buildings surrounding the quad.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

I am proud of having served as an educator and educational union leader and advocate. I am additionally proud of having been on the first SIUE cheerleading team, having served as the president on the SIUE University Center Board, and having served six years as a member of the Board of Directors for the SIUE Alumni Association.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Take advantage of all the opportunities that lie ahead, but never forget your roots at SIUE. You will make a difference in the lives of others!



# Sharon Stitch '72

**Hometown:** Madison, IL; currently live in Hartsel, CO

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

I am self employed through my own company, SOS Financial Services, LLC. I offer investments, Medicare products, life insurance, college planning and much more to my clients.



**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Walking the path from student housing to classes. I really like my Professors in the Business Education department.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Breaking the class ceiling with many high profile companies, becoming Regional Vice President with Aetna, ING, Metlife and being in the top 5 RVP's to exceed territory sales goals. Raising my son as a single mom and putting him through college with no debt.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Stay focused on what you want to accomplish, work hard, be kind and respectful to everyone you meet. Keep your family as top priority. Always be thankful for everything you have achieved.

# Elizabeth Thomas '66

**Hometown:** Florissant, MO

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Retired---Elementary Teacher in District 189--  
East St. Louis, Illinois

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

My fondest memory is of the teachers who were so very helpful.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

To have worked with children to develop academic and life skills; To see the success of many former students; To have a student submit my name to be listed in the 1990 Edition of Who's Who Among America's Teachers which means that she thought that I had positively influenced her life.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Follow your dreams. Continue to improve your skills.



# George Torres '72 '74

**Hometown:** Bloomington, IL

## **Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

I am a Professor Emeritus at Illinois State University. I held the position of Director of the Bilingual Teacher Education Program and Assistant to the Dean of the College of Education.

## **Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

When I was doing my MS degree, I was introduced to the classroom as a TA and each class that I taught was an experience never to forget.

## **Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

I am very proud to have developed and implemented the first State of Illinois Certified Bilingual/Bicultural Teacher Education Program. Most of my time in academia has been devoted to the development of teaching and learning programs for English Language Learners.

## **What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Follow your dreams. You have been given a great education from a great institution and is up to you to apply it for your benefit and for the benefit of those who you will impact.



# Theodora Tonkinson '70 '75

**Hometown:** Alton, IL

## **Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

I am retired after teaching primarily eighth grade English but also high school literature, speech as well as serving for several years as theater technical director during my 33 years in ACUD #11, Alton, IL.

## **Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

I loved having our small core of buildings right there in the circle, where I attended classes, worked at various jobs, studied and ate meals. I'll always love that place.

## **Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

I'm proud to have sponsored countless middle school yearbooks and newspapers as well as school spelling bees, especially having some students in the regional finals.

## **What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Use your cooperative learning skills with your coworkers. You'll have good friends for life and be a valued member of your company.



# Dr. Jane Vieth '72 '76 '91

**Hometown:** Glen Carbon, IL

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Assistant professor- Eastern Illinois University

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Favorite teachers William Ahlbrand, Jim Comer, Carol Keene, and Robert Rockwell. Also Charlie Cox, photographer.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

My loving family and founding Aunt Jane's Early Childhood Centers. I'm proud of my granddaughter Claire who graduated from SIUE's nursing program this May.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Set goals, work hard, and treat all people fairly and with respect.



# Dr. Mary Vollmer-Moran '72 '74

**Hometown:** Litchfield, IL

## **Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Program Officer in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.

## **Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Working in University Extension Services under College Work Study and being a lifeguard at Tower Lake.

## **Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Helping to improve Federal Education programs.  
Traveling to several countries and studying different cultures.

## **What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Follow your passion



# Elizabeth (Betty) Von Bokel '72 '74

**Hometown:** Aviston, IL

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

I was a teacher at Aviston Grade School for 33 years.

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

I still have many friends from my college days.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Many students remember me as one of their favorite teachers.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Be kind to everyone.





# Charles "Joe" Weaver '63

**Hometown:** Jefferson City, MO

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Regional Accounting Manager for Unilever Inc.

**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Meeting with the ARC students in the Union Building for a break and talking about the faculty.

**Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

Helping new employers to succeed in their assigned careers.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Do your homework everyday and never fall behind.



# Jim Wiemers '72 '76

**Hometown:** Dorsey, IL

## **Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Even though neither of my degrees were in journalism, after jobs in several different fields I finally spent the last 32 years of my employment in the editorial division of Concordia Publishing House. My lifelong activities in church work and writing for newspapers served me well for my job in religious publishing.



## **Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

I worked on the Alestle for three years. I interviewed so many interesting people--from movie stars to political leaders. I covered campus demonstrations against the Vietnam war and for civil rights. 1968 to 1972 were certainly active years in U.S. history, and I was glad to be part of recording these events.

## **Proudest Accomplishments Over the Last 50 Years:**

My lifelong interest and gifts in music, writing,, and religion have brought me much joy in serving God and His children. I've traveled to all 50 states and a number of countries around the world, but it has always been so important to me to remain in my hometown and serve the good people here as a musician and choir director among my friends and relatives. My ancestors' farms have been in this area for over 150 years, and I am happy to stay close to my roots.

## **What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2021?**

Never assume that you will have a lifelong career in the area of your major degree. If it happens, that's fine; however, life can give you many twists and turns. If you are suddenly presented with a job for which you do not have much of a background but interests you a lot, go for it! You may be surprised how happy and fulfilled you become.

# Carol Winetroub '72

**Hometown:** St. Louis, MO

**Current or Most Recent Position Held:**

Transplant Social Worker (retired),  
Iowa City VA Transplant Center



**Fondest Memory of SIUE:**

Being a member of the Kappa Alpha Mu and the Alpha Sigma Tau sororities, and the many friendships made.

**Proudest Accomplishment over the last 50 years:**

My bright, caring, & dynamic children! Professionally, being the 2010 recipient of the Lee Suszycki award from the (international) Society for Transplant Social Workers.

**What advice do you have for the SIUE Class of 2022?**

Quote from James Rouse: “When you sail a boat, you’re guided by the North Star. You don’t reach it, but it’s what you sail toward.”



2022  SIUE  
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*50th Reunion*



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