



FIRST COMPLETION CEREMONY SLATED AT GATEWAY PROJECT

NEWS RELEASE

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Four students, who were among the first to enroll in classes with the University of Southern Indiana's Gateway Project in downtown Evansville and now are the first to complete the program, will be honored at 11 a.m. Friday, June 14, at St. John's Church on Bellemeade Avenue.

Receiving certificates of completion from Dr. M. Edward Jones, associate vice president for Academic Affairs and director of Extended Services, will be Tony Bolin and Joanna McCloud, computer information systems majors; Hannah Howell, nursing; and Cherie Sweet, business administration. The Rev. W. R. Brown, Sr., pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, will be the speaker.

The Gateway Project was started two years ago, taking USI programs into the center city where proximity could mean the difference to people who might not otherwise consider higher education classes. Kandace Hinton, Gateway director, said the program prepares the students for college study, then allows them to work at their own pace to complete 22 to 28 credit hours of course work.

Some students enrolled in Gateway and have switched to regular courses at USI, Hinton said, while the four being honored Friday are the first to complete the entire Gateway program. They are qualified either to continue their education or enter the job market, Hinton said.

Howell said she hopes to continue classes with the USI School of Nursing. A mother of four, she praised Gateway for what it has done for her but declared, "One thing I really like was the way it has encouraged my children. They've seen me go to school, open the books and study, and college is more important to them."

(more)

Howell's daughter, Tina Kemp, 21, is considering entering the Gateway program. Son Tony Howell, 16, is enrolled this summer in Upward Bound at Vincennes University, a program for high school students interested in college. The other children are 13-year-old twins Troy and Terry Howell.

Bolin is a 30-year-old Navy veteran who works at UPS and Sir Beef in addition to his computer studies. He said Gateway "is an excellent program that everyone who wants to go back to school should go through." His plans are to continue his classes and later find employment in the computer field.

Hinton said feedback from the community has been tremendous, that many feel the Gateway Program is "the best thing that has happened in the center city in many years."

She noted the four students being honored Friday have pursued their studies diligently. "They have been determined, making ways for themselves, even changing life styles" to assure that they would succeed at Gateway. She has no doubt all four will obtain associate degrees and believes they will continue through baccalaureate degrees.

"I think (Gateway) is providing our students with the confidence that they can succeed," Hinton said. "That's probably the thing we do best."