



# NEWS RELEASE

## 30th anniversary documentary to air September 10 on WNIN

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For immediate release  
August 18, 1995

An hour-long documentary, "University of Southern Indiana: By the People, for the People," will be aired at 6 p.m. Sunday, September 10, on WNIN-Channel 9, telling the USI story in commemoration of its 30th anniversary on September 15.

The documentary was produced by Nancy Briggs Johnson, director of Alumni Affairs and a 1983 USI graduate who is completing work on a Master in Liberal Studies (M.A.L.S.).

The Posey County native is a past president of United Way there and had created a promotional video for the agency. That effort prompted urgings from Sherrianne M. Standley, USI vice president for Advancement, and Dr. Karen H. Bonnell, assistant professor of communications, that she produce a 30th anniversary video for the University.

She agreed to produce the video if it would gain her three hours of credit needed to complete the M.A.L.S. The credit was approved and in January, Johnson embarked on six months of work that was harder than any other she had encountered in her master's studies.

The video documents the persistent struggle that first made USI a branch of Indiana State University in 1965 and 20 years later, turned it into Indiana's fifth baccalaureate-granting institution. University officials and community leaders and lawmakers in Evansville and southern Indiana had held fast to the goal of a separate state university for the pocket area.

The goal was achieved on July 1, 1985, when then Governor Robert D. Orr -- a long-time Evansville resident and political/civic leader -- signed the enabling legislation in a ceremony at the Physical Activities Center, amidst cheers from area legislators, USI officials, and many others from the University family.

Dr. James R. Blevins, dean of the School of Liberal Arts, vividly recalls how two ISU students, sent to cover the bill signing for the school newspaper, were bewildered by the jubilation that surrounded the separation of USI from their alma mater. His comments are included on the video and among 94 pages of memories, gleaned from interviews with 18 people who were part of the creation of USI, that have been deposited in the archives at the David L. Rice Library. Included are:

(more)

**Dr. David L. Rice**, who retired in 1994 after 27 years of guiding a thriving school through the politics of Hoosier government and education

His successor, **Dr. H. Ray Hoops**, who took over leadership responsibilities on July 1, 1994  
**Frank F. McDonald, Sr.**, then Evansville mayor who was instrumental in bringing ISU to the city and served on support agencies that have helped guarantee continued growth

**Joseph E. O'Daniel**, Evansville businessman and long-time University supporter who became a charter member of the USI Board of Trustees and served as its president for several years  
**Rolland Eckels**, retired Bristol-Myers Squibb executive who also joined the battle early and continues support for the University today

**Byron C. Wright**, emeritus vice president for Business Affairs who came to USI with Dr. Rice and shared the leadership and legislative duties until the two retired in 1994

Other faculty members interviewed, all of whom started with USI's original classes in the old Centennial Elementary School, are:

**Marjorie O. Labhart**, instructor in science and mathematics

**Dr. Daniel A. Miller**, emeritus professor of history and author of a University history, *How the South Won: The Making of USI*

**Dr. Donald E. Pitzer**, professor of history and founder/director of the USI Center for Communal Studies

**Eric L. vonFuhrmann**, assistant professor of English

The narrators are USI graduates **Ann Komis '76** and **Dean Webster '83**, WFIE. Channel 14 news and sports personalities. Other graduates who recall the past are **Carole D. Rust '77** of Mt. Vernon, Alumni Association representative on the USI Board of Trustees for several years, and **Harolyn G. Torain '71**, a member of USI's first graduation class who is an Indianapolis public school administrator and a member of the USI Board.

Also on the video are Evansville attorney **F. Wesley Bowers**, a former state senator; **Judy Clabes**, former editor of *The Sunday Courier & Press*; **Robert Fair**, former state senator and USI Board member; **Bettye McCutchan**, long-time USI Foundation officer; and **Tom Tuley**, editor of *The Evansville Courier*.

The video will be available from USI to interested organizations after the Channel 9 airing. **WNIN**, which is a co-sponsor of the documentary presentation, will provide a free transcript of the show on request.