



# NEWS RELEASE

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## COMMUNITY TRIBUTE PLANNED HONORING DAVID AND BETTY RICE

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A community-wide tribute is being planned to honor USI President David L. Rice and his wife Betty for their 27 years of community and educational leadership. The Tribute to David and Betty Rice, to be held at the Vanderburgh Auditorium Gold Room on Wednesday evening, March 2, was announced today by Donald B. Cox, longtime USI Foundation Board member who has worked on many shared projects with the Rices. Cox said the entire community owes a debt to the Rices "for giving the southern Indiana community more than a quarter-century of their extraordinary leadership. David and Betty Rice not only deserve credit for development of a fine public university, but also for serving many organizations here, particularly those which touch young lives," Cox said.

Invitations to the dinner will go out February 8. Reserved tables of eight will be \$350 per table or \$43.75 per person. Open seating also will be available at \$35 per person. The ticket price will include a 6:00 p.m. cocktail reception, the 7:00 p.m. dinner, and program following. Dignitaries from throughout the region and state are expected to attend and participate in the program. People desiring to purchase tickets may do so by contacting the USI University Relations Office, 812/464-1755.

President Rice will retire from USI's presidency at the end of June after serving as its founding president. He brought his family to Evansville in 1967, two years after the Evansville campus of Indiana State University was founded. The first administrative head of the campus, he developed the curriculum from limited two-year associate degree offerings into a comprehensive curriculum of more than 60 undergraduate majors and six master's level programs.

When Dr. Rice joined the University, classes were held in the old Centennial Elementary School. He worked with community leaders and ISU officials to create a master-planned campus west of downtown Evansville. The first buildings opened in 1969 and today the 300-acre campus has several major buildings valued close to \$55 million. A new \$14.8 million Health Professions Building will open next fall. USI's enrollment has grown to more than 7,500 students, 1,300 of whom live on campus in housing built by Southern Indiana Higher Education, Inc., a nonprofit foundation which has worked closely with USI to develop educational opportunities.

When the campus was founded, it was always intended that someday it would operate as a separate state university. In 1985, legislation was enacted which created the University of

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Southern Indiana with a separate board of trustees. President Rice's careful leadership to develop a strong curriculum and assemble a competent teaching faculty was cited during studies to determine the University's readiness to operate apart from ISU.

Beyond building a University, both David and Betty Rice have been instrumental in building community inside and outside the University. Mrs. Rice has been actively involved in many community and state groups, including the Girl Scouts, YWCA, United Way, American Association of University Women, Westwood Garden Club, Evansville Home Economists, Extension Homemakers, Posey County Community Foundation, Operation City Beautiful, Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra, Delta Kappa Gamma, and PEO educational organization. She also has owned her own business, Peckenbaugh's Garden Center, while handling the myriad duties of USI's first lady.

Dr. Rice has been active in the Evansville Housing Authority, Leadership Evansville, United Way, WNIN Public Broadcasting and Indiana Public Broadcasting, Greater Evansville Chamber of Commerce, The Villages, Youth as Resources, Governor's Title XX Citizens Advisory Committee, Evansville Museum of Arts and Science, Buffalo Trace Council Boy Scouts, Rotary, Evansville Coalition on Adult Literacy, Evansville Museum of Arts and Sciences, Indiana Conference for Higher Education, and Southern Indiana Rural Development Project.

Cox, who is chairing the Tribute, has assembled a committee of community leaders to assist with organizing the dinner program. Committee members include Bill Brooks, business consultant; Walt Brunton, Citizens Bank; Jerry Crawford, NBD Bank; Jan Davies, Girl Scouts; Joe Ellsworth, Rainbow Productions; Carolyn Georgette, retired from Indiana Bell; Gary Gerard, Red Geranium Enterprises; Bob Griffin, Escalade and Indian Industries; Pete Helfrich, Evansville Convention and Visitors Bureau; John Lippert, National City Bank; Pam Martin, Chamber of Commerce; Carol McClintock, WNIN Channel 9; Robert R.C. Miller, business consultant; Bob Ossenberg, television executive; Connie Romain, Romain Buick; Al Samuelson, Keller Crescent; Mike Vandeveer, Bristol-Myers Squibb; and Jim Will, Sr., Jim Will Insurance. Several USI staff members also are assisting with the Tribute. They include Senior Vice President Byron Wright, Alumni Director Nancy Johnson, USI Foundation President and Director of Development Suzanne Nicholson, Special Events Director Joyce Assalone, and University Relations Vice President Sherrianne Standley.