

## SEGUE

## SIU System Interim President Dorsey: 'we are stronger together'

By Madelaine Deardeuff  
For the Intelligencer

EDWARDSVILLE — On the first Segue episode of 2019, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Chancellor Randy Pembroke, Ph.D., welcomes SIU System Interim President J. Kevin Dorsey, MD, Ph.D.

Prior to becoming interim president in July 2018, Dorsey served as the provost and dean of the SIU School of Medicine in Springfield for 14 years beginning in 2001. This week's episode will air at 9 a.m. on Sunday, Jan. 6, on WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound and [siue.edu/wsie](http://siue.edu/wsie).

Dorsey's career in medicine began when he earned a bachelor's in chemistry and a doctorate in physiological chemistry. He was a postdoctoral fellow in biology at The Johns Hopkins University and went on to complete an internal medicine residency at the SIU School of Medicine, followed by a two-year rheumatology fellowship at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. Dorsey then returned to Carbondale, where he practiced rheumatology and taught medical stu-

dents.

"I want to take this opportunity to thank you for stepping in as interim president of the SIU System," Pembroke says. "I appreciate what you are doing for SIUE, SIU Carbondale and the School of Medicine. It is great to have you at the helm of our system. People often describe you as having a calming disposition, which has served you well as a doctor and educator, but is a much-needed quality to have in a system leader.

"To have suddenly jumped into the role as interim president, what have been your priorities in the early months?" Pembroke inquires.

"I knew I needed to calm the waters and get the SIU System back together, stop the fighting, and get everyone to see the advantages of each other," Dorsey says. "From my point of view, we are stronger together."

As a former dean, provost, faculty member, researcher and clinician, the transition to interim president was certainly challenging for Dorsey. Particularly, his commute from his home in



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SIU Interim President Kevin Dorsey pictured at the 2018 SIUE fall commencement ceremony.

Springfield to the Carbondale campus three to four times a week is the most taxing. "Carbondale needs a lot of attention right now," Dorsey says. "Edwardsville has things tucked in very well, so I'm not around to visit nearly as often."

"One of the challenges of administration that I have faced is that we are called upon to be the

voice of positive encouragement, but also share the difficulties of reality," Pembroke mentions.

"I tend to prefer the honest, open and realistic view of how things are, but you don't want to leave people hanging. You need to share the plan, where we go from here, because everyone will understandably think the worst," Dorsey says.

Though his administrative duties take up a large part of his time, Pembroke mentions that he always makes time to play the piano. He earned both bachelor's and master's degrees in music education/piano performance from SIUE in '78 and '80, respectively.

"When I was living in Carbondale, I had a well-established practice and spent about 60 percent of my time there, and also taught at the University," Dorsey recalls. "When I became the dean and moved to Springfield, I wound up not practicing, and the dean's job stretched out 14 years."

Dorsey still finds joy in teaching rheumatology, but he does not practice medicine any longer.

"When people enter medical school, they start the process wanting to become doctors and exit medical schools as specialists in very specific fields. At what point in the process do they decide what type of specialist to become, and do we have too many students in one area and not enough students in another?" Pembroke inquires.

"Medical school is four

years long, and students decide what to specialize in and complete a residency, which can take three to seven years," Dorsey explains. "Then, there is a match process. Students pick out schools and what specialization they would like to pursue. The schools interview the student, and a computer matches them with that school. The issue is that there are more people applying for residencies than there are positions available."

"Was there a particular professor or patient that influenced your decision to pursue rheumatology as your specialization?" Pembroke asks.

"I felt that I had to be an expert at something, and rheumatology is a subspecialty of internal medicine, which covers all adult illnesses," Dorsey says. "That was broad for me, so I wanted to pick something that fascinated me. The diseases in rheumatology were so complex, and I enjoyed that."

To hear Pembroke and Dorsey's entire conversation, listen to Segue at 9 a.m. on Sunday, Jan. 6, on WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound or [siue.edu/wsie](http://siue.edu/wsie).