

Regional

SIUE airs 100th episode of "Segue" radio show

On March 6, 2011, the College of Arts and Sciences at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, in collaboration with campus radio station WSIE, began a series of weekly radio shows about the lives and work of the faculty, staff, alums, students and visiting scholars of the College. What began as an experiment has turned into a success, so much so that this Sunday at 9 a.m. the 100th episode of "Segue" will be aired.

To make this episode something very special, I asked six former guests of the show to return and comment about the importance of this outreach initiative not only for SIUE but also for the listening audience and the community. One of the questions that came up was how this idea originated and how it has been maintained on a weekly basis for almost two years.

The idea for this show occurred to me after first meeting with the faculty of the College and noting how very diverse they were as people and as teachers and scholars. The talent that is here in the College became especially apparent while we were editing a book titled "Adventures in the Academy," published by CAS that includes some of the remarkable stories of the people of the College.

I have extensive experience hosting radio shows, beginning in 1971 while an undergraduate at the University of Barcelona in Spain. Later, in my position as head of a major environmental group in my native Venezuela, I had the opportunity to write, produce and oftentimes host hundreds of broadcasts.

Then, between 2005 and 2009, I produced, directed and usually wrote for a radio show at KASU, an NPR-affiliated station at my former academic institution, Arkansas State University. "Science in the Natural State" was a series of four-and-a-half minute shows on scientific topics. Its title was a play on the Arkansas state motto.

When I became dean at SIUE I contacted the chair of the department of mass communications, Gary Hicks, to discuss what



SIUE Photo by Daniel Martinez

The taping of the 100th episode of Segue that is also being Web cast. From left to right: Prince Wells (Music), Brian Jack (Historical Studies), Aldemaro Romero (College of Arts and Sciences), Dave Kauzlarich (Sociology and Criminal Justice), John Korak (Music), João Sedycias (Foreign Languages and Literature), and Randy Pearson (Geography).

kind of radio show could be produced here. Without even a budget, we decided to proceed with a half-hour interview style show. Marilyn Marsho, former director of development for the College, came up with the name "Segue," which appropriately described our idea of transitioning through different topics during the 30-min-

ute conversations.

So we aired our first show, an interview with Ruth Slenczynska, a world famous pianist who for several years worked as a resident artist at SIUE. Since then, in addition to the studio interviews, we have added shows produced on location, including in science laboratories, the SIUE

Gardens and even Joplin, Mo., one year after the devastating tornado hit that area. We also began to Web cast the show so the audience could not only listen to the guests, but also watch them on the Internet.

Throughout these 100 episodes my objective has always been to make the guests feel comfortable and to showcase their

Aldemaro Romero College Talk

work. To that end, I develop an empathy with the guest, an empathy that I hope will always be picked up by the listener and viewer. I research both the guest's background and her or his field of work. During the interview I try to align my questions to the guest's personality.

I try not to bring attention to myself. After all, it's not "The Aldemaro Romero Show." I do realize, however, that the audience has to like the host and be willing to share part of their day with him. It can be a difficult balance. To this end, I try never to insult the intelligence of the listener, while making sure that when a guest uses jargon from his or her discipline, I always have them explain it so that everyone can understand. My approach is that the broadcast is more like eavesdropping on a personal conversation than a formal radio interview.

I, of course, do not do this alone. I have an extraordinary team of SIUE professionals who have made this show possible: Gary Hicks (executive producer), Wayne Mills, Kwame Ross, and Michael Cathey (engineers), Wendy Shaw (Internet postings), and Pam Read (staff support). The show's music was composed and performed by my late father, Aldemaro Romero Sr., which makes me very proud. And, of course, my greatest appreciation goes to the more than 100 guests who have appeared on "Segue" so far. After all, this show is all about them.

Aldemaro Romero is the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. His show, "Segue," can be heard every Sunday morning at 9 a.m. on WSIE, 88.7 FM. It can also be heard and viewed at: <http://www.siu.edu/artsandsciences/CASsegue.html>.

He can be reached at College_Arts_Sciences@siue.edu.