

Segue: SIUE Alumni Association engages, educates and empowers Cougars for life

Madelaine Deardeuff

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EDWARDSVILLE — incorporated in 1972, the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Alumni Association exists to establish, nurture and maintain the relationship between the University and its alumni.

On this week's episode of Segue, SIUE Chancellor Randy Pembrook, PhD, interviews Alan Kehrer, president of the SIUE Alumni Association.

This episode will air at 9 a.m. Sunday, April 28, on WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound and siue.edu/wsie.

Kehrer earned a bachelor's in business administration with an emphasis in management and a master's in business administration from SIUE. He has been an Alumni Association board member since 2013 and served as president since 2016.

Professionally, Kehrer currently serves as a regional human resources leader for Whelan Security. Previously, he worked in loss prevention for grocery and retail organizations such as Shop N' Save, Macy's, May Department Stores, Target and Venture. A civic-minded volunteer, he

has spent time supporting the Edwardsville High School boys soccer booster club and the Special Olympics. He also served as a fundraising chairperson for St. Boniface Catholic Church.

"It's almost that time again—and it's hard for me to believe—for commencement! We are happy to have you represent our alumni and speak to all of our graduates at commencement each semester," Pembrook says. "As you attend each ceremony, what strikes you the most?"

"Aside from the tradition of commencement, the quality of SIUE students and graduates is astounding," Kehrer says. You see the hope and inspiration in their eyes. You also look in the stands, and it is filled with prior alumni, as well. They carry on that tradition of excellence from SIUE."

"It is fun for me when it comes to the point in the ceremony where you or one of your fellow board members come on stage," Pembrook remembers. "It is toward the end of the ceremony, and all the graduates have crossed the stage and family members have cheered.

"That moment on stage feels like the actual transition that students become graduates and are ready to go out into the world."

During the upcoming commencement celebrations, SIUE will also host its third annual Golden Graduation Reunion. The event honors and welcomes alumni, who graduated 50 or more years ago, back to campus. Guests can enjoy a guided bus tour of SIUE and Edwardsville, reunite with their fellow classmates at a reception hosted by Pembrook, attend a brunch the morning of commencement and participate in the ceremony.

“Some of the alumni that participated in the last two Golden Graduates ceremonies remembered graduating in a parking lot or a field over 50 years ago. The Quad wasn’t even built yet,” Kehrer says. “They come back, share their memories and connect with people they haven’t seen in decades.

“The stories they tell from when they were here as students are very special.”

In addition to the University’s commencement activities, the SIUE Alumni Association is also heavily involved in organizing the annual Homecoming festivities.

“I heard you were the founder of the Cougars Unleashed Homecoming Run, one of the events that occurs during Homecoming weekend,” Pembroke says.

“Cougars Unleashed is a 5K and 10K run on Saturday morning of Homecoming weekend,” Kehrer says. “Initially, our goal was to attempt to raise money for the Association’s scholarship fund.

“We annually give about \$30,000 in scholarships to incoming and current students, and we are always looking to increase that. The run ended up being a great way to bring alumni, local community members and other runners to campus to have fun and raise funds for those scholarships.”

Last year, more than 400 participants came to campus for the event, which also includes a one-mile fun walk.

The fourth annual Cougars Unleashed Homecoming Run is scheduled to occur on campus Saturday, Sept. 28. Participants can feast upon Chris Cakes’ specialty pancakes after their run. The annual Student & Alumni Homecoming Tailgates will take place later that afternoon at Ralph Korte Stadium prior to an SIUE Men’s Soccer match.

To learn more about the SIUE Alumni Association’s impact on campus, Homecoming festivities occurring this fall, alumni outreach events and other topics, visit siue.edu/alumni.

Tune in to Segue at 9 a.m. this Sunday, April 28, on WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound and siue.edu/wsie to hear Pembroke’s and Kehrer’s conversation in its entirety.