

SEGUE

Maj. Gen. John Flournoy Jr. discusses SIUE's impact on his military career

By Madelaine Deardeuff
For the Intelligencer

Each week on Segue, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's premier radio show, hosts Greg Budzban, PhD, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Dean, and Randy Pembroke, PhD, SIUE Chancellor, discuss the lives and work of the people throughout the University community and beyond.

This week, Budzban interviews SIUE alumnus and CAS Hall of Fame member Maj. Gen. John C. Flournoy, Jr., Chief of Staff of the United States Transportation Command at Scott Force Base, Illinois. This episode of Segue will air at 9 a.m. Sunday, June 2, on WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound and siue.edu/wsie.

"My father was in the Air Force, and we first



Flournoy

arrived on the base in 1970," Flournoy says. "I went to schools right outside the base gates and ended up bouncing around schools in Mascoutah. Ultimately, I enrolled at SIUE."

Flournoy, who originally transferred Auburn University, earned a bachelor's in political science in 1986. Since his graduation, he has enjoyed witnessing SIUE transi-

tion into the large, public university it is today.

"SIUE had more of a commuter atmosphere, and we did not have the dorms that you have today, which make it feel like a true university," Flournoy says. "It has been absolutely phenomenal to see SIUE change over the years."

Influenced by some "tough love" from his father, Flournoy admits that his academics were not up to par prior to his transfer from Auburn, and his admittance to SIUE provided him with the second chance he needed.

"I got into SIUE on probation, and someone gave me an opportunity—a second chance—and had it not been for someone giving me that second chance, I wouldn't be where I am today," Flournoy says.

"Given your long and

distinguished career, I believe it was an excellent decision to come to SIUE!" Budzban says. "But most importantly, part of the purpose of the American university system is about giving people opportunities for second chances, and I am glad to see your decision worked out."

Flournoy originally entered higher education to study and become a veterinarian, but determined he wasn't fulfilled in that profession. He went on to join the ROTC program with aspirations of becoming a pilot. He used the United States' tension with the Soviet Union as a motivator and took on political science as his major and studied Russian language.

"Today's political atmosphere is massively different from what it was in the 1980s and 90s," Flournoy explains, "we

have to be smart about how we do things, and how we use our diplomatic efforts to try to stay on safe grounds."

Early on in his military career, Flournoy dove into his undergraduate pilot training right after graduating from SIUE in 1986. He went on to train and fly B-52s with the 325th Bombardment Squadron.

"Those are huge planes!" Budzban exclaims.

"Those airplanes were old back then, and they are still old today," Flournoy says. "They are the same models used since 1962. It's a phenomenal piece of equipment, and we were able to see how the military integrated new technology with older planes. Now, we can use the equipment as efficiently as possible."

"I had read that the Air Force completely

re-outfitted the B-52s, but I didn't realize how much that outfitting has affected their operations," Budzban says.

"The B-52s will be around for a lot longer and continue to be used today," Flournoy says.

Flournoy has spent over 3,600 hours in flight and has received a plethora of awards and decorations for his service, including: Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, among many others. The well-decorated serviceman believes that lifelong learning can be a pathway for success not only in the military, but also for all people in the workforce.

For more of Budzban and Flournoy's conversation, tune in to Segue at 9 a.m. Sunday, June 2, on WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound and siue.edu/wsie.