

SIUE chancellor, Sunset Hills Country Club president discuss business leadership, golf and more

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Southern Illinois University Edwardsville is surrounded by a number of thriving businesses, such as La Cross Dental Co. and Sunset Hills Country Club, that contribute to the local economy.

On this week's episode of Segue, SIUE's premier radio show that discusses the lives and work of the people on campus and beyond, SIUE Chancellor Randy Pembroke, Ph.D., interviews Cory Darr, president of both La Cross Dental Co. and the board of directors at Sunset Hills.

This episode will air at 9 a.m. on Sunday, May 12, on WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound and on siue.edu/wsie.

Darr graduated with a bachelor's in business administration with majors in accounting and finance from Illinois College in Jacksonville. He began his career as an auditor at Clifton Gunderson in Springfield. He later became a CPA and went on to work at Wells Fargo Home Mortgage in Clayton, Mo. At Wells Fargo, he worked as a member of the reporting and analytics group in the capital markets team. He later moved on

to be a mortgage-backed securities trader.

Eighteen months ago, Darr joined La Cross Dental Co. as president. He and his family have lived in the Edwardsville and Glen Carbon area for the past 18 years and enjoy all that the community has to offer, traveling and volunteering for local organizations. He has also served as a board member of Sunset Hills since 2014.

"It's great to look at your career and see the different paths it has taken, which exemplifies how a degree in business administration with majors in accounting and finance can lead to work in any industry and job field," Pembroke says.

"How did your experience prepare you for your role as president of La Cross Dental Co.?"

"My career at Wells Fargo was pretty fast-paced and stressful, but it helped me learn how to multitask and prioritize my time," Darr said. "It ended up being an extraordinarily positive attribute as I entered the position at La Cross, because in a business of that size, within the offices of both Illinois and Missouri, there are decisions that must be made all day, every day."

Darr's activities at La Cross Dental simply depend on the day. Since his arrival, most of his responsibilities have included handling acquisitions and mergers. Some days, he works predominantly with the buying and selling of different real estate for the company's practices. Other days, he's seeking out options for insurance programs and effective accounts receivable maintenance, and other practices.

“It depends on where the day takes me!” Darr exclaims. “Sometimes, you have to be willing to adjust your schedule on the fly. As the company has grown and changed, there are some challenges that come with that.”

“What do you believe to be the keys to success that you have experienced in your own life and career?” Pembroke inquires.

“Having started in public accounting and moved into banking, and now, with my most recent move to La Cross, I have always tried to keep an open mind and have always had the desire to achieve the most that I could with whatever opportunity I was given.

“I take a step back and try to be adaptable to any role that I had, and tried to be honest with my coworkers and our business partners.”

The oldest of three siblings, Darr recalls that his leadership traits were instilled from a young age through the guidance of his parents.

“My parents taught me how to be a good person, and I have tried to carry that forward into my career,” Darr says.

As president of the board of directors at Sunset Hills, which is located on Country Club View Dr. off Hwy 157 South in Edwardsville, Darr works with other board members to ensure that they are applying the best uses of the club’s funds, run the club as effectively as they can and be great stewards for the members.

“Over the past few years, the board has served as a general manager for the club,” Darr says. “We work directly with the four department heads that run the club on a daily basis and report back to the board.”

Sunset Hills has been a part of the Edwardsville-Glen Carbon community for almost 100 years and will be celebrating its centennial in 2022. The facility has always featured its golf course, but in recent years, it has expanded to feature an Olympic-sized swimming pool, a swimming and diving team for youth members, tennis courts, a lake for fishing, two restaurants, a grand ballroom and multiple meeting spaces.

“Before I joined, I had a preconceived notion of what a country club was, but it is nothing like that,” Darr says. “It’s not stuffy or reserved in the slightest. It’s a fun place to spend time with your family.”

The public has accessibility to rent the club’s event spaces and order catering directly through the club for those events.

To hear more about Sunset Hills Country Club, Darr’s work at La Cross Dental Co. and other topics, tune in at 9 a.m. on Sunday, May 12, to WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound or siue.edu/wsie to hear this week’s episode of Segue in its entirety