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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

JOHN W. MOORE

JUNE 2000

### Dear Colleagues and Friends:

The 1999-2000 academic year came to a symbolic close on Saturday, May 6, with the celebration of the University's 129th Commencement. It was a memorable day for more than 1,200 graduates who received their degrees and, especially, for some who received special recognition, honors, and awards.

The Hines Memorial Medal, given to the graduates with the highest cumulative grade point averages — 4.0 this year — was awarded to Jill Fosler, an elementary education major from Indianapolis, and Conor Grimley, Terre Haute, a President's Scholar majoring in life sciences. Conor is the son of the late Liam Grimley, a professor of special education at Indiana State. The President's Medal for Leadership, Scholarship, and Service was awarded to Corey Simon, a mathematics education major from West Terre Haute. Melanie Zeck, a President's Scholar from Kokomo, gave the commencement address, and it was superb. As president, it always brings me great joy in seeing so many remarkable students achieve their

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academic and personal goals and to do so in such impressive ways. More personally, several students that I have had in class this year were graduated, including five doctoral students. I was pleased to shake their hands as they came across the stage.

It also was a pleasure to honor members of the faculty who contribute to the fulfillment of our academic mission and who do so at a high level of excellence. This year, the Caleb Mills Distinguished Teaching Award was presented to Dr. Jolynn Kuhlman, associate professor of physical education, Dr. John Ozmun, associate professor of physical education, and Dr. David Prentice, professor of life sciences. The Theodore Dreiser Distinguished Research and

Creativity Award was presented to Dr. Paul Burkett, professor of economics, and Dr. Ann Tomey, professor of nursing. Dr. Robert Clouse, professor of history, and Dr. Karen Liu, professor of elementary education, were recipients of the Faculty Distinguished Service Award.

Two internationally respected individuals were awarded honorary degrees for their exemplary contributions to the arts: Dr. William Ashbrook, Jr., and Stuart Vaughn. Bill Ashbrook, Trustees Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Humanities, is an internationally recognized opera scholar. An alumnus of Indiana State and a native of Terre Haute, Stuart Vaughn, both an actor and a director, has been one of the most prominent people in American theater during the latter part of the 20th century. It was a thrill for all of us to honor Bill and Stuart by presenting them with Doctor of Letters and Doctor of Humane Letters degrees, respectively.



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For me, of course, this commencement will remain my most memorable one, given that it was my last as president. I reflected on the realization that I had presided over eighteen commencements during my two presidencies — at California State University, Stanislaus, and here at Indiana State University. Each one was a personal high.

As you know, I think the act of celebration is important, and that is what commencement is — a celebration of the ending of a successful academic process and the beginning of a new opportunity for continuing personal growth. As president, commencement is my favorite academic tradition; I surely will miss presiding, but I will enjoy my new role as president emeritus and member of the faculty.

As I leave the presidency, I do so with an immense sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. I have enjoyed my tenure here more than anything else I have done during my 35 years in higher education. As I have said publicly on several occasions this past semester, presidents don't do much by themselves; it is only through the hard work, dedication, and creativity of others that important things are accomplished within an academic community.

Let us reflect for a moment on all our dedication and hard work has wrought. Together, we have **broadened the scope and quality of services to students**. Thanks to a concerted effort by faculty, student affairs and student support services staffs, and many, many others, we have created a true "student-centered" university. We **enriched the quality of teaching and learning**, providing our students with an exceptional educational experience. Our most recent senior class survey confirmed this when 90 per cent of the graduates reported a high level of satisfaction with their education. We all can take tremendous pride in that.

We **enhanced our academic distinctiveness** through the development of the First-Year Experience Program, a strengthened General Education Program, implementation of a campuswide student assessment program, the establishment of a Center for Teaching and Learning and the Course Transformation Academy, and investment in the President's Scholars Program.

Through such initiatives as the 21st Century Scholars, TRIO, the Adult College Education and Department of Corrections Programs, the Dewey Institute for Learning in Retirement, the Educational Alliances in the Wabash Valley, and Southeast and South Central Indiana, Degree Link, the Professional Development Schools, and cooperative degree programs in medicine, and engineering and technology management, to name but a few, we **expanded educational opportunities for**

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Hoosiers, became known as the "most transfer friendly" of Indiana's four-year institutions, and advanced our reputation as Indiana's "most collaborative university."

Together, we **nurtured our cultural diversity and worked hard to become a more equitable and socially just academic community**. Thanks to the efforts of so many in leading the way — the Affirmative Action officer, the special assistant to the president, and the President's Commission for Ethnic Diversity, to mention but a few — we developed a diversity-focused curriculum, established a visiting minority scholars program, conducted an institutional climate study, revised our Affirmative Action/EEO policy, and addressed race and gender salary inequities, among many other important initiatives.

We **furthered our position as the center of intellectual and artistic expression in West Central Indiana** by expanding opportunities for faculty and students to present their work in concerts, recitals, and exhibitions. Our exceptional Center for the Performing and Fine Arts was constructed as a venue for such cultural activities. And, art from our impressive permanent collection is now displayed campuswide.

Our dedicated staff **improved the aesthetics and functionality of our campus environment**, by completing millions of dollars in improvements to facilities, including the renovation of residential life facilities, a new African-American Cultural Center, improvements to the Science and Fine Arts buildings, a Student Computing Complex, Erickson Hall, construction of the John T. Myers Technology Center, the aforementioned Center for Performing and Fine Arts, Oakley Place and the ISU signature piece at Third and Cherry



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streets, Recreation East, and the Reeve Hall Memorial Arch. Finally, a new and much needed power plant is currently under construction

By restructuring and consolidating administrative areas, implementing annual performance reviews for all employees, implementing a new management information system, conducting extensive institutional research, and establishing energy conservation and award winning recycling programs, we became a **more accountable and responsive academic community.**

Thanks to our outstanding faculty, staff, and private fund-raising team, we **increased private funding and giving to heretofore unimagined levels.** The ISU Foundation was reformed, total private giving continues to increase each year, our endowment has grown to nearly \$40 million, and faculty and staff grants and contracts are at an all-time high.

As a result of much hard work by many people, we have seen a marked **improvement in our enrollment, retention and graduation rates.** There has been a record enrollment of first-time students for three consecutive years, transfer enrollment increased by 20 per cent during the past two years, and residence hall occupancy was over-subscribed. Since the inception of our First-Year Experience Program three years ago, retention has improved to nearly 70 per cent.

We experienced a **rejuvenation of and praise for our intercollegiate athletics program.** During our 1997 NCAA Self-Study Plan and Certification process, we were passed without a single concern beyond what the institution had self identified as areas for improvement. We revived the Hall of Fame tradition, experienced a resurgence of men's basketball, winning the 1999-2000 regular season MVC Championship and advancing to the NCAA tournament — the first time in 21 years, our women's basketball team was invited to the NIT, and our tennis and track and cross country teams distinguished themselves, on a regular basis, at both the regional and national levels. Something I find truly significant and gratifying, is that our student-athletes perform superbly both in competition and in the classroom. We have an exemplary athletics program at ISU — a program of integrity that produces "good athletes," "good students," and "good citizens."

Finally and perhaps most importantly, over the past decade **numerous academic programs and the School of Education received reaccreditation, and we successfully completed our most monumental undertaking — the NCA Reaccreditation Self-Study and the revision of our Strategic Plan.** During the exit interview on March 1 of this year, Dr. Richard Gowen, site team chair, stated that ISU is "an exciting institution doing some

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very very unusual things." We were complimented for our willingness to "tackle something different" in terms of our innovative self-study approach (that was, to use strategic planning as an alternative to the traditional process), and congratulated on "the great progress... in so very many areas."

By way of brief overview, Indiana State University was commended for: our "student-centered faculty... committed to the goal of educating the whole student"; our "attractive and well-maintained campus guided by a well-conceived master plan"; the "depth and breadth of campus participation in the development of the self-study and update of the strategic plan and the extent to which we used the occasion to learn about ourselves"; our "excellent information technology structure and support"; the "commitment of our faculty and administration to serving an extended clientele... reaching out to the local community and constituencies and in forming partnerships to extend educational and cultural opportunities to a vast array of audiences, many of whom are underserved"; our commitment to building and supporting a "diverse, multi-cultural campus environment"; and our efforts to broaden the experiences of our students. Dr. Gowen concluded his remarks by saying, "We like what you do... If you were to focus upon a university as being the ideal of universities that are needed in our country, we hold you up as that ideal."

Yes, Indiana State University, together we have accomplished a great deal. We truly have much to celebrate, and we have learned to do so with justifiable pride and unbridled joy.

As I leave the presidency, I do so with great memories of wonderful times — the excitement of the opening



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*My most cherished memory, however, will always be of the student who, when selected to receive the Alan C. Rankin Award as the Outstanding Senior, said humbly and proudly, "I was admitted conditionally by ISU. The University took a risk, gave me a chance to prove myself, and here I am the Rankin Award winner."*

of each new academic year, the fun of Homecoming and the thrill of starting the trike race and riding in the parade, cheering for our Sycamores and the pride we felt this year in beating IU in basketball and in winning the Missouri Valley Conference championship, Honors Day and the many other wonderful celebrations of academic achievement, and, of course, presenting Christie Schultz with the first John W. Moore Outstanding President's Scholar Award. I'll also remember the little things that mean so much to a president. Students singing "Happy Birthday" on my first day at work, the football team singing the Alma Mater after a game, the Marching Sycamores playing at the Brickyard 400, the alumni rally in St. Louis at the MVC championships, a phone call from a parent of a recent graduate to simply say, "thanks for my son's great education," President-Student Switch Day, the dedication of Recreation East and the joy of the tandem riders, the alumni golf outings, commencement and the expressions of joy and fulfillment on the faces of the graduates coming across the stage. I also will remember, sadly, the sorrow and pain associated with personal tragedies: deaths and injuries involving students, faculty, staff, and alumni of the University.

My most cherished memory, however, will always be of the student who, when selected to receive the Alan C. Rankin Award as the Outstanding Senior, said

humbly and proudly, "I was admitted conditionally by ISU. The University took a risk, gave me a chance to prove myself, and here I am the Rankin Award winner." That is my fondest memory because it symbolizes the essence of ISU. We are a place of educational opportunity; together, we help students transform their lives.

As I leave office, I take with me treasured memories of the wonderful people who are the Indiana State University community: the students, faculty and staff, alumni and friends. As the years pass, recollections of tangible accomplishments fade a bit, but what remains deeply marked in one's heart are the memories of the people. In this regard, I have been blessed with so many great memories, memories of the people of ISU.

As I leave office, I am very conscious of my good fortune in life. I have been a very lucky person to have received the "gift of opportunity" time and time again. In that vein, I want to express my gratitude to the Board of Trustees for inviting me to come here as ISU's ninth president and for the full support the Board has provided during my tenure. Similarly, I am grateful to the ISU Foundation Board of Directors for providing me with the opportunity to serve as president of the Board and in supporting my call for restructuring and change. I remain grateful to the leaders of the faculty, students, alumni, and support staff for their dedication and the opportunities we have shared in a common effort to make ISU an even better place. My administrative colleagues and my staff in Condit House, the best I have ever worked with, need to know how much I appreciate their competence and dedication, their courage and loyalty, and their willingness to experience change through innovation. My words of appreciation are extended to so very many. You know who you are.

As I leave office, I am grateful, as well, for the positive effect ISU has had on my family. Nancy and I value what ISU has done for us. Our children, Matt, Sarah, and David, all have been "touched by ISU" in the same way that other students have been over the years. Sarah earned two degrees here; David will graduate in 2001; Matt was a research assistant in the Terre Haute Center for Medical Education before going on to medical school at IU. As parents, Nancy and I simply say, "Thank you."

As I leave the presidency to join the faculty, I want to express my admiration for my two presidential colleagues, Richard G. Landini and the late Alan C. Rankin. Like me, they enjoyed a love affair with ISU. Presidents Rankin and Landini — understanding Teddy Roosevelt's observation that "it is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of good deeds could



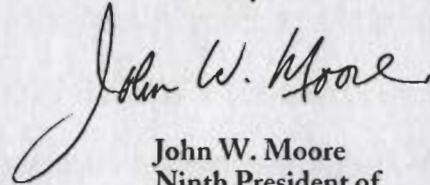
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have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, who strives to do good deeds" — each brought passionate and courageous leadership to ISU and each made substantial and impressive contributions to this university, providing me with a foundation upon which to build further. I am, this day, very grateful to both Alan and Dick.

On July 1, 2000, Lloyd W. Benjamin, III will become ISU's tenth president. He is a talented and able academic leader; he is, most importantly, a good person. I am confident that President Benjamin will lead the University to even higher levels of achievement, service, and recognition. He has my complete support and trust. Nancy and I extend our personal welcome and best wishes to Lloyd and Wieke and their family as they join us here.

Finally, as I leave the presidency, I do so with gratitude and affection for this grand, old institution — our Indiana State University.

Sincerely,



**John W. Moore**  
Ninth President of  
Indiana State University  
1992-2000