

5-12-1990

05/12/1990 - Rives calls for Illinois Secretary of Education

University Marketing and Communications

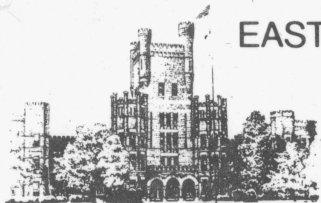
Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases

Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "05/12/1990 - Rives calls for Illinois Secretary of Education" (1990). *Press Releases*. 23.
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases/23

This May is brought to you for free and open access by The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Press Releases by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

File



EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
Charleston, Illinois

news

ART TATE, Assistant Director, University Relations
Office: (217) 581-5983 - Home: (217) 348-7553

90-293

May 12, 1990

FILE COPY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

RIVES CALLS FOR ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

CHARLESTON, IL--In a dramatic break with tradition, Eastern Illinois University President Stan Rives used Saturday's commencement ceremonies to call for a major change in Illinois state government.

"I propose that the new Governor of Illinois not only consider but provide the leadership to establish a Secretary of Education as a cabinet position in the government of our state," Rives told graduates, their parents, and guests. More than 1300 graduates participated in morning and afternoon commencement ceremonies.

Rives said he made the proposal for several reasons. "If a United States Secretary of Education can--and he does--act as an effective advocate of education in the highest echelons of national government, an Illinois Secretary of Education can do the same for Illinois.

-more-

ADD 1/1/1/1

RIVES - COMMENCEMENT

"The Constitution of Illinois is clear on the importance of education to state government. Article X states: 'a fundamental goal of the People of the State is the educational development of all persons to the limits of their capacities. The State shall provide for an efficient system of high quality educational institutions and services' and 'the State has the primary responsibility for financing the system of public education,'" he said.

Every citizen of Illinois must have access to quality education he said. "How can this possibly be true when the wealthiest school district in Illinois spends \$12,866 per student and the poorest district only \$2,085 per student? How can we pretend that Illinois citizens are provided equality of educational opportunity when a wealthy district spends six times as much on the education of each student as a poor district?"

According to Rives, "We cannot preserve equal opportunity and democracy if educational opportunity is such a direct function of place of birth and wealth or lack of it by parents. The funding of Illinois elementary-secondary education must rely less on the property tax and more on the fairer income tax. The State must assume a larger role in assuring equal access to quality educational opportunity. And education is in reality all one system."

He told the audience that higher education needs an advocate too. Responding to recent public queries from Illinois students as to why tuition has increased so much, Rives said, "...it is because state expenditures per student in our Illinois public universities in constant dollars declined in the past decade from \$3,563 in 1980 to \$3,131 in 1990.

-more-

ADD 2/2/2/2

RIVES - COMMENCEMENT

"The percent of the Illinois budget devoted to higher education is less now than it was in 1980. Public school and higher education had 44 percent of the Illinois budget in 1980; in 1990 that share is less than 40 percent. The education of Illinois citizens is four percent less important than it was a decade ago.

"An Illinois Secretary of Education must say all this and more to the General Assembly, Governor, and the people of Illinois. And she or he must say it from a position of real and increased authority in the government of Illinois."

Rives said, "Our Secretary of Education must be a member of the State Board of Education for elementary-secondary as well as the Illinois Board of Higher Education, must be an advocate for all of education, must make clear that real economic development in Illinois is dependent upon quality education available to all our citizens, and must understand and convince others that an educated citizenry is essential to a functioning democracy."

Chancellor Thomas Layzell of the Board of Governors of State Colleges and Universities spoke at the morning ceremony.

Following Rives' comments, Donald L. Calvin, chairman of International Business Enterprises, Inc., of New York, was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree, the University's highest honor.

William E. Hoffee of Fairfield, a member of the Board of Governors, also addressed the graduates during both ceremonies.

Other speakers included Student Body President Patty Kennedy of LaGrange and EIU Alumni Association President Robert L. Mitchell of St. Charles, Missouri.

-more-

ADD 3/3/3/3

RIVES - COMMENCEMENT

Also honored was Home Economics Professor Ruth Dow, the recipient of Eastern's 1990 Distinguished Faculty Award.

Physics Professor P. Scott Smith represented the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences as faculty marshal in the morning ceremony and Physical Education Professor Tom Woodall represented the College of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation as faculty marshal in the afternoon ceremony.