

1-29-1997

01/29/1997 - Rockford Attorney Reflects on First Year as EIU Trustee

University Marketing and Communications

Follow this and additional works at: https://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases_1997

Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "01/29/1997 - Rockford Attorney Reflects on First Year as EIU Trustee" (1997). 1997. 43.
https://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases_1997/43

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Press Releases at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in 1997 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

97-37

January 29, 1997

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

ROCKFORD ATTORNEY REFLECTS ON FIRST YEAR AS
EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY TRUSTEE

ROCKFORD -- Rockford attorney Thomas S. Johnson knows the public universities in the state will have to work hard this spring to attract the attention of Illinois lawmakers already focused on the hot issue of adequately funding elementary and secondary schools.

Beginning his second year as a trustee for Eastern Illinois University, the president of Williams & McCarthy law firm said he and his fellow trustees are ready for the challenge, after a "building" year that saw the establishment of new working relationships in the revamped higher education system.

Johnson was one of seven new board members appointed to Eastern's board by Governor Edgar following the reorganization of Illinois public higher education in 1995. The new board began its term a year ago this month.

"Eastern Illinois University is a remarkably well run institution, and I congratulate President David Jorns and his administration, my colleagues on the

-more-

ADD 1/1/1/1

JOHNSON

Board of Trustees, and the elected leaders of the student body, faculty and staff, for their loyalty and vision and their unhesitating commitment to Eastern and its mission," said Johnson.

Johnson continues to view the adequate funding of Eastern as a top priority. He is delighted that Eastern was recommended for the highest percentage budget increase of all the public universities for next year. As part of that proposed budget, Eastern would receive approximately \$350,000 for deferred maintenance, another priority of Johnson's.

Johnson points to Eastern's continued strong academic reputation and record enrollments as evidence of a smooth transition to a new board. Among board accomplishments this past year, he cites the signing of a three-year contract with Eastern's faculty union that provides pay increases designed to bring EIU salaries in line with those at peer institutions.

Under the new board, Eastern also raised admission standards and supported the passage of legislation that allows universities to retain their tuition revenues in local accounts. The board approved a \$3.8 million energy conservation overhaul that will save at least \$380,000 per year in utility costs, approved purchasing a new telecommunications system that lowered student long-distance charges and upgraded outdated equipment, and supported exploration of a campus-based child care center.

He has spent many summer days on campus in his position as chairman of

-more-

ADD 2/2/2/2

JOHNSON

the Board of Directors for the American Legion Premier Boys State of Illinois, held at Eastern each year. Johnson is a graduate of Rockford College, where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and holds a law degree from Harvard University.

For the future, Johnson is eager to continue the board's work and remains committed to supporting technology advancements on campus. Other chief goals include enhancing diversity on the rural campus and ensuring academic freedom.