

10-22-1997

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### Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "10/22/1997 - Annual EIU Homecoming Parade Set For Saturday Oct25.pdf" (1997). 1997. 382.

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97-291

October 22, 1997

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

ANNUAL EIU HOMECOMING PARADE SET FOR SATURDAY, OCT. 25

CHARLESTON -- More than 100 entries, including a number of floats and bands, will travel down the streets of Charleston as part of Eastern Illinois University's annual Homecoming celebration this weekend.

The procession, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 25, will follow its traditional route of north on Seventh Street to the Charleston Square, then back south on Sixth. Organizers expect the event to take roughly two hours to complete.

In addition to Eastern's own marching band, bands from Charleston, Sullivan, Altamont and Casey/Westfield high schools plan to perform and compete in a new feature of the annual event -- a marching band contest. Performances of the visiting bands will be judged, with first-, second- and third-place winners to be announced -- and plaques awarded -- during half-time of the Homecoming football game.

Also during half-time, EIU's Alumni Association will honor five distinguished alumni. This year's award recipients are: Jerry Gilomen ('66) of Laguna Beach, Calif., Robert G. Knollenberg ('61) of Boulder, Colo., and Steve Woodland ('70, '81) of Oblong, Distinguished Alumnus Awards; Lou Hencken ('66, '67) of Charleston, Alumni Service Award; and Michael R. Gagliardo ('93) of

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Rainbow City, Ala., Outstanding Young Alumnus.

The EIU Panthers host Austin Peay, beginning at 1:30 p.m. at O'Brien Stadium. Alumni, students and community members are invited to stop by Alumni Tent City from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. behind the stadium. Faculty, staff and administrators from Eastern's four colleges (Arts and Humanities, Education and Professional Studies, Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences, and Sciences), the president's office, the School of Adult and Continuing Education, and the Alumni Association will be on hand to mingle with guests. Some tents will feature free food, and there will be free face painting and balloons for the kids.

As part of continued efforts to involve community members in Homecoming festivities, residents of Charleston -- especially those living along the parade route -- are being encouraged to decorate their homes and yards. Those living along Sixth and Seventh streets are being surveyed to determine if there is any interest in an annual home decorating contest and, if so, what the criteria for judging should be. Community volunteers willing to participate on the Homecoming Committee are also being sought.

Other events scheduled for Homecoming Week include the annual pep rally and bonfire, set to begin at 8 p.m. Thursday (Oct. 23) near Lawson and Taylor residence halls, located just off Fourth Street, east of the Wesley United Methodist Church. (In case of rain, the event will take place in Lantz Fieldhouse.)

The agenda includes performances by the Pink Panthers and Eastern's cheerleading squad, and a talk by football coach Robert Spoo. Community members are invited to attend.