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5-9-1992

### 05/09/1992 - Gov. Edgar Returns to His Alma Mater to Address Grads

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#### Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "05/09/1992 - Gov. Edgar Returns to His Alma Mater to Address Grads" (1992). 1992. 454.

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92-160

May 9, 1992

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

GOV. EDGAR RETURNS TO HIS ALMA MATER TO ADDRESS GRADS

CHARLESTON, IL--Gov. Jim Edgar returned today (May 9) to his hometown of Charleston to speak at the spring commencement ceremony at Eastern Illinois University, where he graduated in 1968.

Before giving his prepared remarks to the afternoon graduates, Edgar said he wanted to give special recognition to Eastern President Stan Rives, who will be leaving the University this summer.

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Edgar, the first Illinois governor to receive his undergraduate degree from an Illinois public university, said he has been connected with EIU in one way or another for 41 years and has known or known of all its presidents except the first, Livingston Lord.

"I can say without any hesitation that there has been no president of Eastern who has been more respected by the community nor more liked by the students than President Rives. I just want to recognize him for his many years of dedication to improve the lives of the young people of the state of Illinois," he said.

The governor also praised former U.S. Deputy Secretary of Education John T. Sanders of Columbus, Ohio, as one of the top educational leaders in the nation. Sanders was at Eastern to receive the University's highest honor, an honorary Doctor of Public Service degree.

Currently superintendent of public instruction for the Ohio State Department of Education, Sanders has held top positions in the Illinois, Nevada and New Mexico state departments of education and is past president of the Illinois Teachers' Retirement System.

In his address to the graduates Edgar said, "My charge to you is not to be discouraged by a little adversity in your lives. When we face adversity and challenges, as we in government and those in the public sector do now, we open our minds to new approaches to try to accomplish more with fewer resources and we find new opportunity for a purpose that might have been hidden in the shadows of prosperity."

He added, "The trials of loss and adversity make us stronger as individuals and as a collective family. Adversity allows us to savor the fruits of success, good health and abundance even more with the bad times past."

He asked the graduates to put their energies together to improve the education system and the environment and to work toward providing equal opportunity for all races.

In closing he said, "Your generation will indeed determine whether Illinois and America will grow and prosper in the years and decades ahead."

Rives told the morning graduates, "As graduates of Eastern Illinois University, I charge you to do three things. First, say always what you believe and to believe what you say. Second, think before you act, but do not let thought be a substitute for action. Third, let your thoughts and actions be guided by a worthy purpose, a dream."

In closing his remarks, Rives announced that Barbara Hill is now Eastern's provost and vice president for academic affairs. Hill has been serving as acting provost and vice president for academic affairs since Oct. 21 of last year. Prior to that, she was dean of Eastern's College of Applied Sciences.

Hill received her bachelor's, master's, and a specialist degree in educational administration from Eastern and her doctorate from Southern Illinois University. She came to Eastern in 1969.

Upon the announcement, Hill said, "I am honored to have been chosen for the vice presidency and plan to continue to approach the new position with the same vigor and resolve that I have in an acting capacity. I am confident I will be a positive force in moving the academic affairs agenda forward."

Rives gave special recognition to retiring English Professor Lee Steinmetz of Charleston, recipient of the University's 1992 Distinguished Faculty Award.

Also bringing greetings to the graduates were Board of Governors Universities trustee Dr. Mack Hollowell of Charleston; EIU Student Body President Martha Price of Oblong; and EIU Alumni Association President Jeffrey Knezovich of Naperville.

Faculty marshal at the morning ceremony was Jayne Ozier, home economics professor in the College of Applied Sciences. Robert Meier, professor of computer and operations management in the Lumpkin College of Business, was the faculty marshal in the afternoon.

Nearly 1,500 graduates participated in the commencement, which was the University's 95th.