

Insider

For October 1, 2008

By Kim Burger

I've just come from the rededication celebration of UNI School of Music's Russell Hall building and what a celebration it was! The facility has been enlarged and completely refurbished. Absolutely everything in the building is attractive and state-of-the-art, making it yet another jewel in the list of impressive new facilities we enjoy here in the Cedar Valley community on and off campus. Facilities that embrace the arts, sports, healthcare, history and heritage.

As I walked away from this particular dedication, however, I marveled at the regard the university continues to harbor in the hearts of countless alumna. Some of these former students continue to live here, but others have built lives and fortunes in faraway places. In fact, I rarely attend an out-of town or out-of-state function where someone doesn't run up to me, seeing the city I represent, and introduce themselves as a Panther whose blood still runs purple and asking what's new on The Hill. After watching the excitement and pride in the speakers representing the state, students, faculty, and especially the School of Music's National Advisory Board and private contributors, I have to say I'll be thinking about this particular celebration for a while.

Gayle Johns Rose, a class of '77 alumna, said it well. She shared how the discipline and emotional connection the study of music instilled in her has never left and how the place where all of this happened will always be in her heart even though she has moved on to enjoy great success as a business leader in the faraway city of Memphis, Tennessee. She and the others on her National Advisory Board worked long and hard to insure the building would be preserved and that, to them, it was a respectful act, honoring a memory and a place that meant much to them.

This struck me deeply. How often do we really think about the affect our actions have on others and the memories we're making for the students we share our city with. You don't need to be employed by the university either. Just take a look next door or up the street or at your waitress the next time you go out for dinner. With 13,000 students living in a community of 120,000, there are endless opportunities for interaction. What kind of memories will they take with them at graduation?

Then I thought further of the visitors coming to our community. These people may only be with us for a short time – the duration of the weekend or the meeting or the event they came to enjoy, but think back on your personal travels. You probably remember more about the days you've spent traveling with friends and family than other days and that's an important component to the job of tourism. We're in the business of making memories. I believe this is one reason so many folks enjoy welcoming people at the Visitor Center or working special events.

We're getting ready to celebrate the end of another summer season by pulling all of our Envoy volunteers together for a potluck lunch. It's one of my favorite days of the year

because we share memories about how the season went and what we did well and what we can improve. Everyone is invited to bring a friend to join our ranks as well. This year's celebration will take place on Thursday, October 16th. If you think you might like to learn more about what happens at the Visitor Center and become a volunteer, give our office a call at 268-4266. This would be a great opportunity to meet our Envoy Volunteers and to consider if you'd like to become one.