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## 1995 Founder's Day History

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*Illinois State University*

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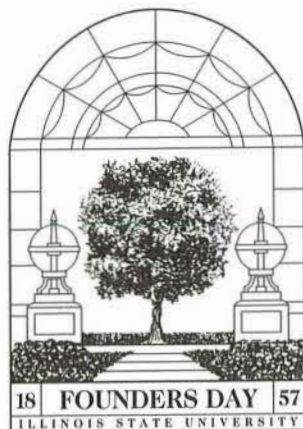
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# Founders Day then and...



By Jo Ann Rayfield  
University Archivist

FOUNDERS DAY WAS INAUGURATED IN 1909, JUST two years after the 50th anniversary of the University and the publication of *Semi-Centennial History of the Illinois State Normal University, 1857-1907*. The annual observance continued until the character of the University changed in the 1960s.

The 326 persons who attended the first Founders Day banquet dined on chicken patties, baked ham, glazed sweet potatoes, brown bread sandwiches, ginger ice cream, cake, and black coffee. They heard toasts from Charles S. Deneen, Illinois governor; from David Felmley, university president; and from students representing various classes. J. H. Burnham, a member of the Class of 1861, delivered an address titled "Some of the Influences which Led to the Founding of the Normal University." Tickets were \$1. The organizing committee cleared \$18.30, which it used to print copies of Burnham's address.

Portraits of Arnold Tompkins and Charles E. Hovey—fifth and first university presidents respectively—which have hung in various campus buildings through the years, were presented to the University during Founders Day activities: Tompkins in 1910, Hovey in 1913.

Founders Day programs, the Hovey sword, and other memorabilia—on display during this year's festivities in Bone Student Center—were given to the University in 1913 by the first president's widow, Harriette Spofford Hovey.

Founders Day continued to include toasts and speeches from students, graduates, faculty, governing

board members, and—frequently—the governor. The annual celebration often had a theme. In 1912 it was the career of Henry McCormick, who was retiring after 43 years at the University. In 1914 Founders Day coincided with the dedication of the Thomas Metcalf Building (now Moulton Hall). In 1915 H. H. Schroeder delivered an address titled "The History of the Peace Movement."

Usually, however, the day was devoted to a celebration of the University and the accomplishments of its distinguished graduates and faculty, who were building a reputation for excellence and service to education in the state. It was—in contemporary parlance—a bonding experience. During the lean years of the 1930s and the war years of the 1940s, Founders Day was reduced to an address to the student body at convocation or to general exercises. Increasingly in later years the banquet was held off campus.

In 1957—as the University celebrated its centennial—senior Donald F. McHenry, who subsequently served as United States ambassador to the United Nations and who is guest speaker at this year's Founders Day, spoke on behalf of his graduating class. Other speakers included members of the Classes of 1882, 1907, and 1932.

In the 1960s, when Illinois State Normal University became Illinois State University with a new and multi-purpose mandate, the celebration of past greatness became less important than the need to define the future of the institution.

The last celebration of Founders Day was in 1966.

ILLINOIS STATE  
UNIVERSITY



## The University Hymn

Glory hast thou, might and power.  
Proud the halls of I S U  
Deeds that live in song and story.  
Loyal sons and daughters true  
So shalt thou in years increasing  
Send thy sons of honest worth,  
Forth to bear with zeal unceasing  
Wisdom's torch throughout the earth.

The University Hymn was written in 1926 by  
Wanda Neiswanger and Jennie Whitten,  
members of the faculty

The music, the "Emperor's Hymn" or  
the "Austrian National Hymn"  
was composed by Franz Joseph Haydn and  
later used by him in his String Quartet, Op., 76, #3.

## A Brief History of Founders Day

The annual celebration of Founders Day began in 1909 shortly after the 50th anniversary and the publication of the Semi-Centennial History of the Illinois State Normal University, 1857-1907 and continued until the character of the University changed in 1966.

The 326 persons attending the first banquet dined on chicken patties, baked ham, glazed sweet potatoes, brown bread sandwiches, ginger ice cream, cake and black coffee. They heard toasts from Governor Deneen, President David Felmley, students representing various classes, and an address by J. H. Burnham (Class of '61) on "Some of the Influences which led to the founding of the Normal University. Tickets were one dollar. The committee cleared \$18.30 which was used to print Burnham's address.

Several presidential portraits which have hung in various buildings on campus were presented in the course of Founders Day activities. (Tompkins in 1910, Hovey in 1913) (Hewett portrait had been donated in in 1907)

The Hovey sword which is on display today (along with Founders Day programs and other materials) was given into University custody by his widow, Mrs. Harriette Spofford Hovey in 1913.

The format continued to include a succession of toasts and short speeches from students, alumni, faculty, members of the governing board and often the Governor.

Often Founders Day had a theme. In 1912 it was the career of Henry McCormick who had taught at I.S.N.U for forty-three years and was retiring. In 1914, for example, the celebration coincided with

the dedication of The Thomas Metcalf Building (now Moulton Hall). In 1915 H. H. Schroeder spoke on "The History of the Peace Movement." Most often the day was devoted to a celebration of I.S.N.U., the accomplishments of a legion of distinguished alumni and faculty as a foundation for a future of excellence and service to education and the state. In modern parlance, it was a "bonding" experience.

In 1957, as the University celebrated its centennial, students from the classes of 1882, 1907, 1932 and 1957. Donald F. McHenry who is our speaker today spoke then on behalf of the graduating seniors.

During the lean years of the 1930s and the war years of the 1940s Founders Day was reduced to an address to the student body at convocation or General Exercises. In other years the banquet was held on campus or (increasingly so in later years) in a facility off campus. In the 1960s, as I.S.N.U. became Illinois State University at Normal with a new and multipurpose mandate, the celebration of past greatness became less important than the need to define the future of the institution. The last celebration of Founders Day was in 1966.

Jo Ann Rayfield

1/31/95

F DRS DAY

183 Jan 12, 1908 <sup>[sic]</sup> should read 1909  
Regular Mtg -

Voted that ~~the~~ in the celebration of  
Founders' Day, we have a banquet.

Mrs. Mr. Mc Cornick + Bowden } Fdrs Day Cttee  
Miss Elz, Barton Lyford }

Also cttee D arrange program for Lincolns Day -  
invite GAR Dunct on here on Lincolns Day

xc  
188  
191  
Reg Mtg Jan 26, 1909

## Founders Day Celebrations

- o list programs by year-
- o list photos by year

coincidental events?

bldg dedications

honorary degrees

- o videos (link)