

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff Members,

I am writing today to inform you of my decision to retire as president of Illinois State University. I have asked Board of Trustees Chairperson Michael McCuskey to convene a special meeting of the Board to formally begin the process to search for the next president of Illinois State. My plan is to stay in office until the next president is in place.

I arrived at this very difficult decision after long and emotional discussions with my wife, Linda, my daughters, Laura and Natalie, and a few close colleagues and friends.

I want you to know that I am not leaving Illinois State to take another position, nor are there any underlying University issues set to emerge in newspaper headlines.

Several years ago, I underwent a significant surgical procedure to address a serious medical issue. Although my current condition is good, I have been advised that as I approach my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, stepping away from a high-pressure, seven-day-a-week position is the best thing I can do for my long-term well-being. While I had planned to retire four years from now, I ultimately decided my highest personal priority must be my health and my family.

The transition to a new president will occur during a period when Illinois State's reputation for quality is at an all-time high by almost every measure. The teaching, research and service of our faculty and staff earn international respect and acclaim. Our popularity among academically motivated students remains strong. Our administrative leadership is solid and, despite the most challenging economy in memory, Illinois State is in a financially enviable position. Our belief in shared governance and commitment to shared decision-making is a model for other universities to follow. I have no doubt that our faculty, staff, student body, administration and governing board will continue to steer Illinois State on its unique path of excellence.

Although serving as president during this chaotic fiscal period has brought with it a great deal of stress, my joys have far exceeded my anxieties, and I look forward to living in this community and staying closely connected to our vibrant campus environment.

I am grateful for your friendship, counsel and inspiration. My love and respect for Illinois State and its people is profound. The University is responsible for my career. It is where I met Linda and where we raised our two wonderful daughters. Illinois State has been the center of my life. I will continue to be a proud Redbird and hope to make Illinois State University an important part of my life for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Al

