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SHU Celebrates 50th Anniversary



Bill Dean presents the official school seal to Bishop Curtis, Charter Night, 1963, with President William Conley at left.

News Story: August 12, 2013

Sacred Heart University will celebrate its 50th anniversary and its remarkable transformation from a local commuter school to the second-largest Catholic University in New England with a series of special events, beginning in the fall of 2013 and continuing through the spring 2014 semester.

A dedicated, cross-functional committee, appointed by President John J. Petillo and led by Associate Dean of the Isabelle Farrington College of Education and longest-serving faculty member Edward Malin, has been planning the celebration for more than a year. The festivities will celebrate the University's storied past, but will also focus on its future as Sacred Heart continues to grow and expand to meet the ever-changing needs of its students.



The celebration had a soft launch during the University's Founder's Day celebration in April and continued with the Thirteenth General Meeting of the International Thomas Merton Society on campus June 13-16. But the celebration will officially kick off with the 50th Anniversary Convocation and Induction of the Class of 2017 on Wednesday, September 4; the 50th Anniversary President's Gala on Friday, September 6; and the 50th Anniversary University Mass of the Holy Spirit on Wednesday, September 18.

Other events will include lectures, panel discussions, art exhibits, programs, concerts, themed movies, community celebrations and special opportunities for community service. Throughout the year, each of the University's academic areas, along with the library, will present special academic lectures and panels. These events will be open to the public.

"We want everyone to get involved – from our earliest alumni to our incoming freshman class. That also includes faculty, staff and members of the local community," Malin said. "We are reaching out to our various constituents and inviting them to become involved. We are especially hoping to see many of our alumni throughout the year."

"It is important for us to acknowledge this milestone in our history. We have come a long way from the commuter school that Bishop Curtis founded in 1963. The world has changed, and we have changed with it," said SHU President John J. Petillo. "Despite that, the core values, mission and pioneering spirit that the Bishop and our other early founders envisioned has never changed. We are a lay-led Catholic institution that is focused on the preservation and transmission of the liberal arts and Catholic intellectual traditions. We are passionately committed to intellectual exchange, the pursuit of truth and service to others. In short—Inspiring Minds, Unleashing Hearts. These are values and goals that today's world needs every bit as much as when the University was founded."

Faculty members will also be very involved in the celebration, including a Digital Commons that will feature the work that the faculty has published. "We are very excited to make the publications of the faculty available," said Malin. "Our faculty has done research and published on a wide variety of topics, and many of them have national and even world-wide reputations in their respective fields. Our faculty members – both past and present – have contributed to the pioneering spirit of Sacred Heart and have been instrumental to its success." Faculty publications can be found at <http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/>.

The 50th anniversary celebration will also focus on Sacred Heart's future, Petillo noted. "We have a great deal to celebrate as we open a new Health and Wellness Building, begin construction on the largest new academic building in the University's history that will house the John F. Welch College of Business and our rapidly growing Department of Communication and Media Studies, unveil the newly renovated Edgerton Center art gallery and patio and expand our presence in Stamford with a new location and new courses for our Graduate Center there."

A special logo has also been developed to commemorate Sacred Heart's Golden Jubilee. It can be seen on all announcements, posters, programs, invitations, etc. that are related to the festivities.

"We welcome everyone to join us in our 50th anniversary festivities," Petillo concluded. For a complete list of events, which will be updated as more plans are made, please go to <http://www.sacredheart.edu/aboutshu/50thanniversarycelebration/calendarofevents/>.