



# Points of Pride



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**FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY**  
*Imagine More*      **FALL 2009**



## President's Corner

This is an especially meaningful academic year as we commemorate our 125th anniversary as a higher education institution. In celebrating our heritage, we are reminded that our legacy commits us to provide opportunity for students. Woodbridge and Helen Ferris meant for their school to be a place of transformation, which remains one of our highest goals.

125 years later, Ferris State University is a place of academic intensity with new degree programs, strong support for students, and dedicated faculty and staff. In Big Rapids, our campus continues to evolve with the newly renovated Rock Café, and construction of our East Campus Suites and Michigan College of Optometry building.

The excitement generated by homecoming and our continued 125th anniversary events is a sign of the vitality and vibrancy of our university. Continuing to move Ferris forward requires we bring our diligence, imagination and institutional pride to bear on that task even as we see the fruits of that dedication.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David L. Eisler". The signature is written in a cursive style.

David L. Eisler

## On Campus Erickson Settles Into Academic Affairs Leadership Role

Fritz Erickson admits that with every new job comes a learning curve, and his transition into the vice president for Academic Affairs and provost position at Ferris was no exception. However, he says his Ferris experience, in the few short months he's been in Big Rapids, has been "remarkable."



"There are some wonderful cultural aspects to Ferris' campus that I've really enjoyed discovering," he says. "Every university has its own culture, and at Ferris that culture is the universal commitment to students.

"This commitment binds the campus together through the idea that we have a common bond – the well-being of students," he adds.

It's this campus vibrancy and energy that makes Ferris special – a unique quality not found at too many other college campuses, Erickson notes.

Also helping make the transition as smooth as possible has been the great outpouring of campus and community support. Having spent all the years of his life except one living in a college town, Erickson says he's never lived in a town quite like Big Rapids with a university such as Ferris.

Erickson says he's really appreciated the kindness and generosity of everyone who has helped make his transition seamless.

On how he's tackling the learning curve, Erickson says, "A piece of advice President Eisler gave me that I love is 'learning the provost job is like trying to learn to fly a plane while you're actually flying the plane.' I've been so fortunate to have a wonderful group of faculty, chairs and deans who have helped me overcome my learning curve."

Even though he's been here less than a year, Erickson believes the university is moving forward and in a good position to continue to provide the tradition of career-oriented programming that position the university well in preparing graduates who will transform Michigan's workforce.

## Dr. Michael Cron Named Optometry Dean

Dr. Michael Cron was appointed dean of the Michigan College of Optometry in August. Cron brings 33 years of Michigan College of Optometry experience to the position. This experience includes chief of Pediatric Optometry Services, interim director of the Campus Clinic, and professor and associate dean.

Cron earned his optometry doctorate from the Illinois College of Optometry. He continues to be involved in post-graduate seminars and courses, including a M.S. in Clinical Research Design and Statistical Analysis from The University of Michigan, School of Public Health. Cron began his career in private practice establishing and managing a practice in Spring Lake, Mich. He joined Ferris as a clinical associate in the fall of 1977.

"The appointment of Cron follows the extraordinary involvement of the MCO faculty, staff and students, along with the excellent work of the search committee chaired by Dr. Roger Kamen. Ferris looks forward to continued growth of the Michigan College of Optometry and the realization of the new optometry building," said Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Fritz Erickson.



## School of Education Ranks Among Top Schools in Michigan

Ferris' School of Education ranks among the top schools in the state of Michigan for teacher preparation.

The designation comes from the Michigan Department of Education, which ranked Ferris' School of Education as exemplary in its 2007-08 Report on Teacher Preparation Institution Performance Scores. Ferris was in line with peer institutions scoring 68 out of 70 possible points.

"This report shows we're doing the right thing," said Michelle Johnston, dean of the College of Education and Human Services, under which the School of Education is housed at Ferris. "Our students are excellent, and this report shows they are performing better than ever; their test scores have improved, and they are more hireable, competent young professionals."

The report helps the state of Michigan identify how well students are prepared for their career as a teacher, School of Education Director Liza Ing said. It is an annual process that helps determine how well students know their content area and whether they have the pedagogy to be a teacher.

"Student teaching is a vital component of the learning process," Ferris Coordinator of Student Teaching and Field Experience Karen Baar said. "The focus is on field experience and really getting students to understand how to be a teacher."





## Founders' Day Kicks Off 125th

One simple statement characterizes Ferris State University: "If it hadn't been for Ferris..."

Many Ferris graduates often remark "If it hadn't been for Ferris..." they would not be where they are today. Alumni credit the school's faculty and staff with giving them educational opportunities not found elsewhere.

The vision for educational opportunities for all began 125 years ago when Woodbridge N. Ferris and Helen Gillespie Ferris came to Big Rapids with the dream of creating a school that would help people add value to their lives and open doors of opportunity. On Sept. 1, 1884, Big Rapids Industrial School welcomed its first class of 15 students. Today, nearly 14,000 students call Ferris home, studying not only at the university's main campus in Big Rapids, but in Grand Rapids and more than 19 off-campus sites throughout Michigan.



"Against the backdrop of the critical transformation of Michigan, it is worth remembering that Ferris established its leadership in higher education by linking its work distinctively to society, culture and the economy it serves through the lives it builds," Ferris President David Eisler said. "That legacy has led to the current era when Ferris' enduring mission is as pivotal to an expansive future as it has been to the achievements and rewards of the past."

To honor the vivacious educational ideas and dedication to opportunity of Woodbridge and Helen, the university community is eager to invite alumni and friends from far and wide to join in the celebration of 125 years of educational opportunity through a yearlong series of events.

An annual tradition at Ferris to celebrate its heritage each September, Founders' Day helped the university kick off the series of activities and events honoring the past, present and future of Ferris State University.

Ongoing projects celebrating the university's heritage include the Initiative 125 Service Challenge and 125th Geocaching Event.



# Anniversary Celebration

## Ferris Steps Up to the Challenge: 125 Service Hours for 125 Years

Running through April 23, 2010, the Initiative 125 Service Challenge continues Ferris' trend of community service and volunteerism. The goal: Spend the year volunteering on campus and in the community to earn 125 or more hours of service.

"The Initiative 125 Service Challenge is based on the belief of our founders, Woodbridge and Helen Gillespie Ferris, that the world improved over time through human endeavor," said Mary Kay Maclver, associate director of Advancement Services. "This initiative provides an opportunity for Ferris faculty, staff, students, alumni and area community members to honor Woodbridge and Helen and our 125th anniversary by making a lasting impact in their communities as a result of their volunteer efforts."

According to Matt Valleu, the amount of reported community service hours by students has increased almost 30 percent within the past three years. "Ferris faculty, staff and students have a great history of serving the Big Rapids community. This service challenge is a great way to get more people involved," Valleu, a student staff member in the Office of Student Leadership & Activities and a senior majoring in Public Relations, said.

## Have GPS Must Travel

The 125th Geocaching Event is calling all adventurers. If you have a GPS and the travel bug is itching, this event is your next big quest. To participate, all you need is a GPS device, a 125th Geocaching Event card and a few hours of time, said event chair Scott Thede. Explorers can test their navigational skills through May 2010.

Geocaching is a high-tech treasure hunt, with caches hidden and maintained by anyone who wishes to participate, Thede said. Adventurers then find these caches using GPS units. A cache is a box containing coordinates describing how to find the next cache. The caches designed for the 125th Geocaching Event will include informational material about the university.

"This is just one more fun way for people to get involved in Ferris' celebration of its 125th anniversary," said Maclver, Geocaching Steering Committee member.

For more information about Ferris and its 125th anniversary celebration, visit [www.ferris.edu/125](http://www.ferris.edu/125).





## Coles Passionate About Strengthening Community Outreach Efforts

Ferris' Athletics department has sought to bridge the gap between the university and the Big Rapids community. To highlight the work of the Athletics department's outreach efforts, *Points of Pride* staff sat down with Associate Athletics Director Jon Coles to discuss this mission and how student-athletes are bridging the gap.

*POINTS OF PRIDE:* How do Athletics' community outreach projects complement the educational mission of Ferris with respect to its student-athletes?

*COLES:* It's all integrated. Not only do we want our student-athletes to leave Ferris equipped for the work world, but we want them to leave as better people based on their experiences at Ferris. We want them to leave as leaders in life. Our student-athletes will gain incredible life experiences here and community service is just one aspect of those experiences. We believe that community service and outreach are critical to our society, and our student-athletes know that. Also, service is one of the six key attributes to Division II sports: sportsmanship, passion, balance, resourcefulness, learning and service.

*POINTS OF PRIDE:* Can you speak to the importance of building a strong bridge between Ferris and the local Big Rapids community and how student-athletes play a role in that effort?

*COLES:* Our student-athletes are great ambassadors for the university. They are a major part of the bridge between the campus and the community. Our student-athletes are well-rounded and personable young adults who in numerous ways represent the university in a positive light. This is just one way to put them front and center as ambassadors to our university to strengthen relationships and to show that we're not isolating ourselves at Ferris. We're a part of the community.

*POINTS OF PRIDE:* How does community service fit in with the partnership Athletics wants to build with the community?

*COLES:* The community has supported this university and the Athletics department for years from the stands and with their checkbooks. The community is constantly asked for support from all angles. It's time we ask the community what we can do for them as we begin to give something back to them for all that they've done for us. This is part of how we strengthen that bond between the university and the community, and our student-athletes play a vital role in that mission.

*POINTS OF PRIDE:* Beyond service, how important is it for Athletics to encourage face-to-face meetings between student-athletes and members of the community?



COLES: Through community service initiatives, the community gets to know student-athletes on a more personal level. The activity is the conduit for a connection to be made and relationship to be developed. Student-athletes are making a difference in the lives of people in the community, and as I said before, this strengthens the bond between Ferris and area residents. People then not only feel proud of on-field accomplishments but off-the-court work, as well.

*POINTS OF PRIDE:* How do your student-athletes feel about community service and engaging the local community?

COLES: I think they value the relationships they make when they're out in the community. This kind of community service model is something they can take home with them as they give back to their hometown communities. We've had a number of student-athletes, even this summer, who have gone back

to their local communities to give something back to younger kids. Some of these projects our student-athletes do end up being hard work, but in the end our student-athletes appreciate that they are able to get out and do something for other people that will be heartfelt. It's a great part of their student-athlete experience at Ferris.

*POINTS OF PRIDE:* How has the partnership with General Mills benefited Ferris Athletics?

COLES: We are very lucky to have General Mills' financial backing for this initiative. Thanks to General Mills, we've not only been able to serve our community, but also other communities, including a disaster-relief project in Indiana involving our women's soccer team. The support of General Mills has helped our efforts to reach out to communities tremendously.

*POINTS OF PRIDE:* Athletics recently held "Battle at the Ballpark." How does this game fit in with the community outreach mission of Athletics?

COLES: We're always looking for ways to branch out so we can get into different communities with our student-athletes and our coaches. We want to engage communities. This game was important for us because it was another outreach effort that got our student-athletes into the Grand Rapids market. We're hoping this will open up even more opportunities for our student-athletes to engage in projects that will make a difference in the lives of kids in and around Grand Rapids as we've worked to do in the Big Rapids area.

To learn more about the Athletics department's Community Engagement Project, visit [www.ferris.edu/sports/community](http://www.ferris.edu/sports/community).



## Creation of Helen's Garden Honors Founder

Helen Gillespie Ferris had a love of flowers and gardening. She also made an impact in the classroom at what is now known as Ferris State University, the only public institution in the state of Michigan to bear the name of its founders: Woodbridge N. Ferris and Helen Ferris.

In remembering Helen's love of gardening and her passion for education, Ferris announced the creation of Helen's Garden.

The garden will be nestled between the university's Prakken and Alumni buildings on the northeast corner of campus featuring plant varieties notable in early 20th century gardens such as Bluebell and Lily of the Valley. Taking the concept from vision to fruition will be Ferris students studying Ornamental Horticulture.

"Ferris has a rich history and was built on a beautiful love story," said Ferris professor emeritus Frank Crowe, who was inspired to propose the creation of Helen's Garden after reading at length about Ferris' founders. "You know the adage, 'Behind every good man...I think Helen was in front of a great man.'"

John Vanderploeg, Ferris professor of Biology and Ornamental Horticulture, will lead the team of students charged with developing Helen's Garden.

## Firing Range Named After Dr. Robert Parsons

Dr. Robert L. Parsons' name is synonymous with law enforcement education and training throughout the United States.

To honor the man who has dedicated his career to the education and training of police officers, Ferris announced it is naming the university's firearms training range The Dr. Robert L. Parsons Law Enforcement Training Center.

"When people think about a university they think about education, but universities are also about people," Ferris President David Eisler said. "Dr. Parsons' impact on the Criminal Justice program and the law enforcement profession is still evident today. Ferris State University has the premier Criminal Justice program in the state, and he is the linchpin that made this occur."



Parsons, Ferris professor emeritus, founded the university's Criminal Justice program in 1972. In addition to building a strong academic program from which more than 3,000 students have graduated, he also worked tirelessly to secure grant funding to strengthen the training opportunities for future and current police officers.

The firearms training range opened in 2000 and is located in Rogers Heights, just south of the university's Big Rapids campus. The facility originally was used for training by Michigan Police Corps cadets. Currently, students studying Law Enforcement through the Criminal Justice program use the

facility for course work. Other police training courses also are conducted through a National Institute of Justice grant.

## Simulator Helps Criminal Justice Students Play it Safe

Law enforcement officers can find themselves in dangerous situations during which split-second decisions must be made.

Students in Ferris State University's School of Criminal Justice are being prepared, through the use of technology, to make the best and safest decisions possible in potential life-or-death situations – while also learning how laws and agency policies apply. Ferris' training process for students includes participating in various shooting simulations, which include a variety of scenarios that can be preselected and adjusted on the fly to simulate real-world situations.

"It's surprisingly realistic. That's the thing that strikes you the first time that you go through it," said Thomas Burnette, a 2009 graduate of Ferris' Criminal Justice program. "Your heart rate goes up, and you get tunnel vision on the screen ... even though you know it's not real and you're in a classroom. It feels like, when you're in the middle of it, that you're really in the scenario."

Added Tyler Haynes, another 2009 graduate of Ferris' Criminal Justice program, "It's one of the closest things you can get to a real situation without being on the street."

The simulation has benefits that extend beyond students in the School of Criminal Justice, said Cecil Queen, an associate professor in Criminal Justice with nearly 27 years of experience. Queen also indicated that even local law enforcement (including the Mecosta County Sheriff Department and Ferris State University police) officials have participated in simulations on campus.

"This is a phenomenal training tool that has been effective not only for our students, but also for members of local law enforcement who have come in for training," Queen said.

In addition to the shooting simulator, the School of Criminal Justice also has a raid house that was funded by a grant from The Ferris Foundation where marking cartridges may be discharged during the life-like scenario evolutions. Rooms can be set up to simulate what it would be like for an officer to enter a house or an apartment building where role-players are used to add as much realism as possible. The room can be reconfigured in several different ways and even includes furniture to enhance the scenario.

"It's all part of the learning process," Burnette said. "Everything that we learn in class is fair game before, during and after the scenario. You have to sit down and do a report and you have to explain and justify your actions based on the law. It brings everything that we're learning inside and outside of the classroom together."





## Rock Café Keeps Mouths Watering, Stomachs Full

What is “just so darn good” and keeps people coming back for seconds at Ferris State University? It’s the newly renovated Rock Café.

Averaging 5,000 patrons per day, and serving more than 177,000 customers during the first six weeks of operation since re-opening in August, the Rock Café has become the talk of the town, and it’s no wonder why.

Just take a look at some of the options circulating through the menu: Prime rib and roasted baby potatoes with rosemary and thyme seasoning, along with fresh-cut green beans; salad greens tossed in white wine vinaigrette with walnuts, blue cheese crumbles, bacon crisps, and wedges of strawberry and green apple; Hawaiian pizza from a woodfire oven; stir fry prepared on a Mongolian grill with enough meat, sauce, spice and vegetable options to create just about any Asian cuisine creation the imagination can dream up.

Even if your taste buds prefer something more traditional from a turkey sandwich to a burger and fries, you’ll find it at the Rock Café.

“The positive feedback we’ve received from students, and faculty and staff has been great,” Lori Helmer, director of Dining Services, said. “It’s so rewarding to have worked with such a great team to make this renovation happen, and in five months, is tremendous.”

Students today want an element of entertainment with their dining experience, a concept we call “eatertainment,” Helmer added. The Rock Café was designed with the marketplace concept in mind, which offers this type of dining experience as food becomes the star and the staff is on stage.

“We’ve created a state-of-the-art social gathering space that’s warm and inviting yet contemporary in style,” she said. “Different eating areas were purposely created to provide flexible dining.”

The latest trend in student dining is the marketplace concept, which provides an integrated food production and dining experience with an emphasis on fresh ingredients and made-to-order preparation, she explained.

“This has been a big hit for students,” Student Government President Claire Gould said, adding her favorite spot in the Rock Café is the “Comfort Food” station where she can get the foods that remind her of home.

The facility is open 7 a.m. to midnight seven days a week and is open to the public.

## East Campus Living Facility a 'Suite' Complex

By August 2010, home "suite" home will take on greater meaning for Ferris State University students residing in the school's new East Campus living facility.

Students checked out of East Campus Apartments for the final time at the end of the Spring 2009 semester, ending a nearly 50-year run as home to students, faculty and staff, and their families. But, when one chapter closes another begins. Replacing the seven buildings formerly located at the corner of Ives Avenue and Damascus Drive will be three, three-story, modern apartment-style residential facilities for students.

The \$22 million project will provide accommodations for approximately 300 students and will be designed for 9.5-month, single-student housing during the fall and spring semesters for students 20 years of age or older.

"This is going to be right on par with many new campus buildings you're seeing built for housing students," said Mike Hughes, associate vice president for Physical Plant. "We wanted to emphasize a sense of community with this project, and we feel like we're going to have that when it's finished."

The suites will include all of the amenities many students expect from residential life on a college campus: air conditioning, common areas for gathering, elevators, laundry rooms and a study lounge. Each building will house 24 four-bedroom suites and two two-bedroom suites. Students will have their own furnished bedroom and share a full bathroom. To make the apartments feel more like home, there is a furnished living room and full kitchen in each suite.

"Students have different expectations coming to campus these days than they did when they were coming to campus in the 1950s and the 1960s," Hughes said. "We feel like this is going to help us in appealing to students who have those different expectations of what a campus living environment is going to be like. A lot of our students are coming to campus having lived in their own room, and they have the expectation that is going to continue in college."



## Contact Information

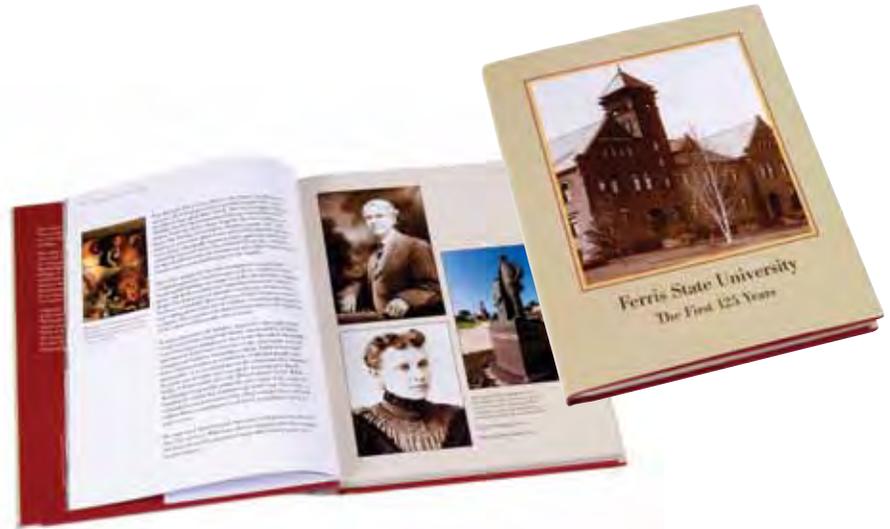
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Editor: Leah Nixon  
(231) 591-5604  
leahnixon@ferris.edu

Contributing Writers: Sandy Gholston, Leah Nixon and Mikinzie Stuart

Graphics: Al Williams

Photography: Bill Bitzinger and Calvin Carter



*Ferris has a long and storied history that is comprehensively chronicled in Ferris State University: The First 125 Years. From the university's beginnings as Big Rapids Industrial School to now, the coffee table book is filled with images accompanied by stories which highlight poignant events that have defined and shaped the university. The books are available for purchase for \$24.95 at Barnes and Noble Lundberg Bookstore, Great Lakes Book and Supply, the Old Pioneer Store and Emporium, and the Ice Arena Pro Shop. The book also may be ordered at [www.ferris.bncollege.com](http://www.ferris.bncollege.com).*

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