Campus gets interstate sign — finally!

It's taken 15 years and the efforts of six campus deans and many more student government leaders, but the University of South Florida St. Petersburg is finally getting signs on I-275 directing travelers to the campus.

Although it was established in 1965 as the first branch campus of USF, the St. Petersburg campus will be the last one to get directional signs on the interstate. Despite the more than decade-long struggle of USF administrators and city officials, the campus was not acknowledged along the highway because there already were too many signs on the stretch of interstate leading to the campus.

But thanks to St. Petersburg Mayor David Fischer and the Pinellas County Legislative Delegation, USF got its signs on Feb. 28. The signs now are posted along the north and southbound lanes of I-275.

The interstate signs not only direct visitors to the campus but advertise its presence to passersby. It's also a marketing tool to attract potential students.

"The campus is an integral part of downtown St. Petersburg, and the signs are one more way to advertise that great things are happening there," said Campus Dean Bill Heller. "We're the only public university in Pinellas County, and now more people than ever will know where we are."
Seniors netting success on the superhighway

A class of 50 courageous senior citizens was propelled into an adventure on the information superhighway recently when they enrolled in the newly offered SeniorNet program at USF St. Petersburg.

SeniorNet is a program that teaches people 55 and over how to use computers. Classes, which run for eight weeks in either St. Petersburg or Tampa, cost $45. Details: Call Lee Leavengood, 974-5263.

Volunteer instructor Bill May tutors Gene Williams during a SeniorNet class at USF St. Petersburg. SeniorNet teaches senior citizens computer skills.

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Not only have I recommended this class, I have helped people get on the waiting list.”

And there is a waiting list. About 400 people attended an open house in February, which the campus sponsored to assess whether there was enough interest to offer the program. Some 200 seniors officially registered, and a lottery was held to decide who the first 50 students would be. SeniorNet classes were then launched.

Campus officials recently opened a satellite center in north St. Petersburg to accommodate people living in Largo, Clearwater and Seminole.

“We feel strongly about the community here,” says Julie Gillespie, director of advancement.

“This is a way to serve the senior population with something very practical.”

Although the main mission of the university is teaching, research and public service, Gillespie believes public service is too often sacrificed because of budget considerations. She views SeniorNet as an opportunity.

“SeniorNet continues to involve seniors with the community and the university with them. I think that’s what makes this unique.”

— M.J. Sullivan (’87)
Ken Rollins is 'first-class'

A year ago, Ken Rollins headed the Polk Museum of Art in Lakeland, an institution that received kudos from the National Endowment for the Arts. The former USF National Alumni Association president and USF charter class alumnus turned the museum — a former supermarket — into a stunning $5-million, debt-free facility that was accredited by the American Association of Museums.

But Rollins, then 51, needed a new challenge. He found one in the Florida Gulf Coast Art Center in Belleair, the bay area's oldest art institution.

"The move wasn't career advancement in the traditional sense — at the Polk Museum, I had a large endowment, million-dollar operating budget and a large staff," says Rollins. "The art center is much smaller than Polk. It isn't accredited, and is not widely known in the southeast."

Those drawbacks were exactly what appealed to him. He embarked on a course to turn the art center on its head. Well before his first official day of work as executive director, he developed a three-year strategic plan for the center.

"That way, I was able to hit the ground running and move the institution forward from day one," Rollins says. "There was no catch up, no time spent bringing the board up to speed."

But with the plan came some major, controversial decisions. One was to sell part of the art center's land to create an endowment that would get the institution forward from day one, Rollins says. "There was no catch up, no time spent bringing the board up to speed."

He took board members on a weekend planning retreat to introduce his ideas, which the board adopted when Rollins began working at the art center.

"That was the plan," Rollins says. "But that approach wouldn't help the center get the necessary accreditation to be taken seriously. For that, the center needed to distinguish itself by specializing in select categories."

Rollins and the board agreed the center would continue its permanent collection of 19th and 20th century American art, but begin focusing on contemporary Florida art from the 1960s to the present. In that vein, the center has exhibited and purchased work by such well-known Florida realists as photographer Clyde Butcher, dubbed the Ansel Adams of Florida, and landscape painters Hansen Mulford and John Briggs.

Another focus is on American fine crafts — clay, glass, metal and fiber works — especially objects created by artists from the southeastern United States. Rollins has established two biannual exhibitions to solidify those commitments.

He also strengthened the center's history of teaching by hosting master artist workshops to attract artists from across the country.

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The art center's mission also needed fine tuning. "The center was a small, emerging institution with an unfocused approach to collecting — meaning it took whatever people wanted to give," Rollins says. "Often small museums are like grandma's attic — they take whatever comes their way."

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Peter French, who holds the Cole Endowed Chair in Ethics at USF, facilitated two group discussions on the ethics of power and sexual harassment at the American Stage Theater in St. Petersburg in March. The discussion was based on David Mamet's play, Oleanna. Actors Paige Thompson and Jeff Norton performed the last act of Oleanna, and the audiences got a chance to respond to the play's implications. The events were fundraisers for USF's Ethics Center and the American Stage.

Oceanography Camp celebrates endowment

USF reached its goal of raising $100,000 for an endowment to benefit its Oceanography Camp for Girls. The money now will be matched by the state with $50,000.

The camp encourages eighth-grade girls to consider careers in the sciences by giving them hands-on experience in data collection and practical laboratory experiments. The program helps combat stereotypes about science being strictly a male profession, while educating the girls about their local and global environment. The camp is carried out in an ocean setting, and run by USF's marine science department.

The camp also netted $7,000 from its Sirens of the Sea fundraiser in April. Fourteen women, along with USF marine scientists, participated in a research cruise through Tampa Bay and the Gulf of Mexico aboard the RV/Bellows.

The women participated in activities modeled from the Girls Camp, such as measuring water quality and learning how biology, chemistry, physics and geology relate to the ocean's environment.

Fellows awarded Florida Progress professorship

James A. Fellows will fill the Florida Progress Endowed Professorship at USF St. Petersburg, Campus Dean H. William Heller announced recently. This $100,000 professorship was funded by Florida Progress Corp. and received an additional $50,000 state matching grant.

Fellows, a professor of accountancy, has taught at USF since 1982, and has served as the program coordinator for the College of Business Administration at the St. Petersburg campus since 1993. His teaching has earned accolades from students and peers, and Fellows received USF's 1994 Teaching Incentive Plan Award for teaching excellence.

Fellows has written widely on individual and corporate taxation, real estate and partnerships. An article he wrote on consumption taxes and tax reform for The CPA Journal won the magazine's 1994 Max Block Award, which recognizes outstanding articles. Fellows' books include Federal Taxation: Individuals and Federal Taxation: Corporations, Partnerships, Estates, and Trusts. Fellows is a member the American Accounting Association and the Florida Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

Florida Progress CEO Jack Critchfield was pleased with the selection of Fellows. "We look forward to Dr. Fellows' continued contributions to the Tampa Bay area and are happy to have a role supporting his work," Critchfield said.
Dr. Ed Cole Jr. gets honorary degree

Nearly 300 students received degrees from USF St. Petersburg this spring; the campus's commencement ceremony was May 9 at the Mahaffey Theater.

Some 200 students earned bachelor's degrees, 67 earned master's degrees and six were awarded a doctoral degree in marine science.

Dr. Edward Cole Jr. received an honorary doctorate. Cole, a pediatrician and St. Petersburg City Council member, has long supported higher education.

In 1993, Cole established a scholarship fund at USF St. Petersburg for St. Petersburg Junior College students in honor of his granddaughter, Amanda Cole. In 1989, he created the Marie E. and E. Leslie Cole Endowed Chair in Ethics as a tribute to his parents.

The endowment has assisted the campus in developing a curriculum in ethics, attracting eminent scholars and outstanding students, and creating the interdisciplinary Ethics Center.

The commencement speaker was J. Howard Hinesley, superintendent of Pinellas County Schools. Hinesley, who in 1993 was named Florida's Superintendent of the Year, remains committed to academic excellence and high standards.

Russian series a winner

A lecture series on Russia, Understanding the Russians: Past and Present, was the campus's most well-attended series ever.

An average of 400 people attended each of the 13 lectures, which were funded by the Florida Humanities Council and presented jointly by the campus, Eckerd College and the St. Petersburg Times. The series explored the politics, culture and history of the former Soviet Union.

Historic house moves to campus

USF St. Petersburg got its second historic home when the John C. Williams House moved to the campus in the early morning hours of March 29. The 3-block journey began about 2 a.m. and lasted until daybreak.

John C. Williams was one of the founders of St. Petersburg who encouraged Peter Demens to make the sleepy fishing village in south Pinellas County the terminus for the Orange Belt Railway. Williams' home, considered a mansion at the time, is on the National Registry of Historic Places and is a city landmark. Williams lived there only a short time before his death in 1892.

The Queen Anne-style house was built in 1890, and features elaborate "gingerbread" trim, shaped wooden shingles, ornate doorways and a handsomely carved staircase. It was an appropriate dwelling for John and Sarah Williams, who were St. Petersburg's wealthiest residents and came from upper-class, Victorian backgrounds. The couple moved into the house in 1891. In 1905, the Manhattan Hotel was built adjoining the house.

The home now sits next to the 1904 home of C. Perry Snell. The Snell House is another landmark of early St. Petersburg.

Both homes will be restored with funds from a state historic preservation grant. The tower, an original feature of the Williams House, will be reconstructed.

USF faculty, staff, alumni and friends gathered to cheer on the event. "Most people expect to see a house-moving maybe one time in their life," said Jim Schnur, a graduate student of history. "But thanks to the university's pro-active role, we've seen two great historical houses moved to campus."

Courses added in international business

Undergraduate business majors can now study international business at USF St. Petersburg. The campus now offers a concentration in international business within the general business major.

The program was in response to requests from local companies, said Campus Dean Bill Heller. "These days, companies have to meet the demands of global competition. They need their employees to be well-qualified, and these courses provide excellent preparation."
country. The center also displays the work of Pinellas County students in its new student exhibition gallery to encourage art education in the schools.

"It's most disheartening to me, this notion that art is not an essential part of education in this country. Teachers are taught how-to projects rather than art history or aesthetics. Art is an essential part of civilized society. Yet the most sensitive part of ourselves is not being developed in the schools."

So Rollins is not surprised that the arts are unappreciated, and are under full frontal attack by Congress. The art center doesn't receive federal funds, but Rollins still finds the current anti-arts sentiment worrisome.

"Although it's no direct threat to this institution, it's a very frightening thing to institutions around the country. It sets a tone that the arts are expendable."

Rollins spent his career devoted to the arts. After earning a liberal arts degree from USF, he served in Vietnam as a Navy lieutenant. There, he commanded 133 men in a combat unit, managing people and moving things forward.

He promised himself in Vietnam that he'd follow his heart if he made it though the war. He fulfilled his promise, studying ceramics and sculpture at the University of Tennessee. After earning a master's degree, he became a sculptor. He had hoped to make a living from sculpting, but his son's birth was a turning point in his life. "I had to make different choices to provide for him." He began assessing his life and strengths, and his career path turned to arts management.

He credits USF with giving him a solid liberal arts education, and was happy to give back what he could to the university as an alumnus and president of the National Alumni Association from 1991-92. Rollins now serves on several executive committees at USF.

"Gini (Rollins' wife, a USF alumna and fiber artist) and I love USF. It truly was the single most formative institution in my life, and I value my years there. After all, I met my wife there," he says, smiling.

USF microbiologist Joan Rose takes water samples to test for pollution and Cryptosporidium, a microorganism that claimed 104 lives in Milwaukee after a 1993 outbreak.

Profile: Joan Rose

Water pollution microbiologist, USF marine science professor

What she's known for: Rose is considered to be a national expert on Cryptosporidium, a dangerous, waterborne microorganism that can cause death or long-term health problems when ingested.

Career turning point: Rose's reputation was cemented when her research revealed that Cryptosporidium was found in 83 percent of so-called safe water supplies, and was a common source of intestinal illnesses. Although she told the Environmental Protection Agency that current water treatment standards would not kill the tenacious parasite, the EPA didn't act on her report. That proved to be a fatal mistake.

In March 1993, Cryptosporidium invaded Milwaukee's public drinking water filtration system. The parasite went undetected; the Milwaukee Journal attributed 104 deaths to the outbreak and 37,000 people were sickened. The incident was the nation's largest reported outbreak of waterborne disease.

Professional challenges: Keeping up with a decaying infrastructure, such as the challenge of distributing safe water through old lead pipes, Global standards for safe water also are needed.

Current research: Studying wastewater management and disposal practices in the Florida Keys and the impact on water quality there.

Does she drink tap water?

"Yes! When I travel almost anywhere in the United States, I drink water straight from the tap. I may not like the taste of the water in some cities, but I'm not overly concerned about contracting a disease."

On bottled water vs. tap: Tap water in Tampa and St. Petersburg is tested every day to make sure it's treated properly and meets safe standards. But bottled water, which is regulated by the FDA, is not tested in the same manner or as rigorously as tap water, says Rose. "Bottled water can be tap water with just the disinfectants filtered out — and it can be sold right back to you. You won't know its source, how it was treated or what it has in it."

Biggest threats to drinking supply: Controlling waste entering the water system and over-using sewage treatment plants beyond capacity, which results in inadequate water treatment.

Current research: Studying wastewater management and disposal practices in the Florida Keys.
The Pinellas County chapter is booming. Come join the fun!

The Pinellas County Alumni Chapter of the USF Alumni Association has had an exciting and prosperous year, with lots of activities still to come!

The sixth annual benefit golf tournament will be held June 2 at East Lake Woodlands Country Club. Join Us! More than $10,000 has been raised for minority scholarships at USF St. Petersburg as a result of the tournaments and corporate teams are needed; so gather your colleagues and support USF!

We urge all alumni to join us at the Alumni Association’s weekend at Disney World June 9-11. The weekend is a wonderful way to network with USF alumni from across the country while enjoying Disney’s hospitality.

Each summer the chapter hosts its annual membership meeting, which is open to all alumni in Pinellas County and their guests. This year the meeting will be July 6 at 5:30 p.m. at the Feather Sound Country Club. Officers for the 1995/96 year will be elected, and a reception will follow, so please turn out!

To show true USF spirit, the chapter has purchased two season tickets to the USF Basket Bulls games that are available free — first come first serve — to any dues-paying member of the chapter. The chapter also hosts the annual Bulls Blast viewing party at Bleachers Sports Bar each season.

It is the chapter’s mission and pleasure to raise scholarship funds for the students at USF St. Petersburg. This past year, members volunteered at the USF concessions stand at the ThunderDome and at the “Get Downtown” monthly music series at McNulty Station. The chapter also hosts an annual holiday winetasting in December, in conjunction with Snow Fest.

So, join the Alumni Association today and show your USF spirit!

For more information on the Pinellas County Alumni Chapter, call Lisa Wharton at 893-9561.

Don’t miss these events!

Need more info? Call 893-9561.

Celebrity Golf Classic, June 2
Golf with local sports celebrities and alumni in this scramble that benefits scholarships at USF St. Petersburg. Shotgun start at 12:30 p.m. at East Lake Woodlands Country Club. The tournament is sponsored by the Pinellas County Alumni Chapter. Corporate sponsorships are available.

USF Alumni Weekend, June 9-11
Join alumni association members at Disney World for an enjoyable weekend.

Food for Thought Lunch Lecture, June 12
USF coral reef expert Pam Hallock Muller will speak at this lunch, which also will be attended by participants from the Oceanography Camp for Girls. Noon at USF St. Petersburg’s Campus Activities Center. $20.

Pinellas County Alumni Annual Membership Meeting/Reception, July 6
The reception begins at 5:30 p.m. at Feather Sound Country Club. Free.

Cool Art Show, July 8-9
The show, sponsored by PAVA, will be in the Campus Activities Center from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Free.

Bowl-A-Thon, Aug. 19
Bowl for dollars at this scholarship fundraiser! Noon at Seminole Lanes.

Fall Classes Begin, Aug. 21

30th Anniversary Celebration Begins, Aug. 21
Help USF St. Petersburg commemorate its 30th birthday during an upcoming series of events. Watch this space for details.
Recently I had cause to be most grateful for honors that I truly never imagined would come my way. And as I reflect on these honors, I also have reason to point out that attending college was the impetus for allowing me to achieve personal and professional success.

I was literally astounded when I learned of my election into the NFL Hall of Fame in January, and I felt much the same last May when I was inducted into the GTE Academic All-America Hall of Fame. That was an honor I was especially proud of, since it reflected upon my academic achievements while I was in college.

Growing up the youngest of nine children in Eufala, Oklahoma, I had the best role models anyone could be blessed to have in my parents. They taught us the importance of hard work and the Golden Rule. While a college education was important to everyone in my family, we could only achieve that with the help of a scholarship.

I was fortunate to get a scholarship and the opportunity to attend college at the University of Oklahoma. Like my recent honors, I was most grateful just for the opportunity. I knew the rest was up to me and how hard I worked, but that all would have been pointless were it not for the mere opportunity.

For me, the ticket to college was through athletics and the talents God blessed upon me. For others, it may be through academic scholarships. But the common denominator is that we need to stress the importance of education to our youth and find ways to make sure there is adequate funding for deserving students who may have no alternate means to seize the opportunity of a college education.

That’s why I’m so happy to be in a position to give back to the college system that placed me on the road to success. I want to play a role in seeing students receive the same opportunity I did back in 1972 when I enrolled in Oklahoma. I am continually impressed with the excellence surrounding USF and its academic programs.

Join me in trying to assure an opportunity for every deserving student to attend USF by supporting athletic and academic scholarships. I know firsthand how special that opportunity can be. A college education can make dreams come true.

Lee Roy Selmon, a former defensive end for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, is USF’s associate director of intercollegiate athletics.