

Community profile:

Chancellor Sandra Patterson-Randles

Focusing on her university, our community, and one day ... a Kentucky Derby winner!

Indiana University Southeast Chancellor Dr. Sandra Patterson-Randles has two passions – academics and horses. Her philosophy on life is a simple one: education is good for the mind and horses are good for the soul.

In her nine years at IU Southeast she has drawn upon her love of sports and her desire to build a better community to expand the athletic facilities at the university to where they can effectively attract out-of-town sporting events, increasing tourism on the Sunny Side of Louisville.

Born in Chicago as Sandra Susan Reindl, her family moved to the small town of Skokie, Illinois, a suburb north of Chicago while she was still very young. The family later moved to Crystal Lake, Illinois, some 40 miles away when she was in the third grade. While she didn't know it at the time, that move would have a profound impact on her life in the years to come.

The oldest of seven children, her place in the family pecking order was important in the development of her leadership skills. "When I was a kid I had huge responsibilities for taking care of the family. Sometimes I think I didn't have much of a childhood," she recalls. "I practically raised my youngest brother and sister." Both her father and mother had to work because times were difficult for a large family.

"I really enjoyed the big family environment. I think that's where my notions of administration came from," she said. "I was responsible for that whole crew of siblings. They all had differing needs and you had to be sensitive to that. But then again, you had to move the whole group forward. "It's the same thing in academic administration. It really is like dealing with an extra-large family."

The entire Reindl family loved the Chicago Cubs, she recalls. She personally loved the sport so much that she would play pickup games in the neighborhood with friends. "We would just go out in the street and play baseball and just absolutely loved it. We were just out there throwing balls around and having a really fun time."

Baseball wasn't her only sport. The whole family loved the Chicago Blackhawks hockey team. She remembers the "old days" with players like Bobby Hall, Eric "Elbows" Nesterenko, and Reggie Fleming who was known as "The Enforcer". "Reggie Fleming would pull the jersey over somebody's head and punch him out while everybody was going wild. Those were the good old days."

But life had some surprises in store for young Sandra Reindl. "I thought I knew what my life was going to be like. I was studying ballet pre-professionally. I studied for 14 years with Elaine Zoll's troupe as a feed into the Chicago Ballet. I thought I was either going to Northwestern, Valparaiso or the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I was in my junior year in high school on my way to becoming class valedictorian at Crystal Lake High School when, on Palm Sunday, 1965, an F4 tornado went roaring through the town."

That tornado destroyed her father's electrical contracting business as well as the family home. "The tornado killed six of our neighbors including the father of 11 children who lived across the street." She recalls her father and brother saved the man's wife who was pinned when a brick wall fell on her crushing her chest. "It was devastating," she says.

"Until you actually go through something like that and your life is spared, you really don't know what it does to you," she said with a huge depth of feeling. "At that point my whole life changed. My parents decided to up and move to Colorado." Her parents had honeymooned in Colorado Springs and had always wanted to go out West and start a new life. The tornado and its impact on their lives created the impetus to do so. "My dad said our roots have been torn up for us and we've lost everything so we moved to Colorado."

For the young high school student, it was a devastating time. Her parents would not allow her to remain behind in Crystal Lake with her grandparents for her senior year. "So all the schools I wanted to go to and what I wanted to do with my life were out



IU Southeast Chancellor Dr. Sandra Patterson-Randles and husband Jeff work with 8-year-old mare, Miss Jezebel, who is a daughter of Thunder Gulch, the 1995 Kentucky Derby winner, at their farm outside Henryville.

the window. You never know what curve ball life is going to throw at you. You think you have it all planned out and wham-o, you get socked right up the side of the head."

She spent her senior year at Broomfield, Colorado in a "dinky little high school." She was not eligible as valedictorian because she was a new student. After graduating high school she attended the University of Colorado at Boulder and while it was not what she had planned, she says "Looking back at it, I got a superb education there. CU Boulder is today considered a public Ivy League school."

Patterson-Randles attended the university

from 1966 to 1970, as a member of the school's honors program and graduated in four years as the first member of her family to hold a college degree. "I had to graduate in four years. I didn't have the money to stay longer. My parents were broke. They had six younger children. They couldn't afford to put me through school so I put myself through." She starting working at age 14 in her father's electrical contracting shop and over the years worked at a wide variety of jobs, including positions at the local airport near Boulder and tourism near Cripple Creek, Colorado.

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She recalls her college years were during the “hot” years of the Vietnam war. “We had demonstrations against the Viet Nam war with 10,000 people in the street. We had the Students for a Democratic Society blow up the Physics laboratory while I was in the building next door studying classics, and our graduation speaker was Ralph Nader. It was a hoot of a time to go to school,” she says.

From a very young age, Patterson-Randles was always academically inclined and loved horses. Those things remain the “two big things in my life right now,” she says. Since College she has been all over the United States, teaching high school for two years in Western New York and ultimately traveling to central Kentucky. “Frankly that’s the reason I’m here. I love this region. I obtained two master’s degrees and my doctorate at the University of Kentucky. That’s where I formally got into horses because they had a full-scale riding program and animal sciences program at Spindletop Hall right across from the Horse Park.”

Patterson-Randles chuckles when she

recalls that she was taught to ride by a “short little bald guy with twinkly blue eyes” by the name of Cobb Ryan. Ryan was an instructor from Norway who rode competitively in the Olympics in the early 1900s. “I remember one time we were out in the pasture riding in hunt field formation and I was on a little green quarter horse named Dopey . At the top of a hill he did a 90 degree turn, just like a quarter horse would, and I fell off and hit at the bottom of the hill. It knocked the wind out of me and I couldn’t get my breath. Cobb Ryan rode up to me and said ‘Miss Patterson, I know you dropped your riding crop but that’s a very un-lady like way to get down to pick it up.’ I was just cracking up and still couldn’t get my breath.”

She taught for many years at the University of Kentucky specializing in its honors program. After obtaining her Ph.D. she was one of three professors to create an interdisciplinary Great Books program at Kentucky State University imported from St. John’s College in Annapolis, Maryland. She traveled to Boston University where she taught interdisciplinary studies and later traveled to Western State College in Gunnison, Colorado, for 10 years and then to the University of Pittsburgh in Johnstown,

Pennsylvania where she worked for four years as vice president.

It was while she was at Western State College that she married her husband, Jeff. Both loved horses, so their wedding, and in particular the ring bearers, had a markedly equestrian flavor. The rings were carried to the couple on sashes around the necks of the couple’s horses.

“Jeff and I were married on his birthday, June 20, in 1992. The ceremony was held on the outside patio of the Western State College conference center at the edge of campus and was surrounded by a cattle ranch. So we set up a portable pen, one of my students watched over the horses, and then they were led in at the appropriate time to the music of a string quartet. My bridesmaids who led the horses were dressed in British riding outfits. Both horses, Robbie’s Moon and Beale Street Blues, were just great and stood there during the ceremony like perfect gentlemen. They truly were family, and so they had to be part of the celebration.”

Her husband is a native of Louisville and his family has been in the Louisville-Lexington area since the early 1800s. She says they decided one day while in Pennsylvania that they would like to return

to the Louisville-Lexington area and after seeing an advertisement for the chancellor’s position at IU Southeast, they both agreed she should apply. She was accepted based on her academic background and her accomplishments at eight different educational institutions in six different states.

The couple presently owns a 38-acre farm in the Henryville area where they raise horses and have aspirations of one day competing in the Kentucky Derby.

The Chancellor has been at IU Southeast for nine years and now at the age of 62 takes great pride in having recently completed the university’s most successful North Central Association accreditation review. She also takes pride in bringing to fruition a number of long-term dreams of the university such on-campus housing as well as enhancing on-campus sports. With the help of the Clark-Floyd Counties Convention-Tourism Bureau, she received financial support to make major improvements at the school’s baseball, softball and tennis facilities that will allow for tournaments involved overnight hotel stays by teams and family members. “I love to be able to help promote the community,” the Chancellor says.

Study shows spending rose by 2.6 percent

Clark-Floyd tourism spending up in '08 - '09 during recession

During some of the worst years of the current economic downturn, tourism spending in Clark and Floyd Counties rose by 2.6 percent adjusted for inflation according to a report just released by the Clark-Floyd Counties Convention-Tourism Bureau. The study was done by Lexington, Kentucky-based Certec Inc., a company that specializes in tourism-related research.

Certec President James A. Carr said in a report to the Bureau’s board of managers, “The tourism and travel industry contributed over \$376.8 million to the two-county area’s economy in 2009 compared to \$349.1 million in 2007.” He went on to point out, “Direct expenditures by tourists accounted for \$270 million of this total – an annual growth of 2.6 percent.”

The study shows that tourism in the two-county area generated more than \$90 million in tax revenues to various levels of government: \$39.9 million to the federal government, \$32.6 million to the state and \$17.6 million locally.

But it’s not just out-of-town tourists who are helping the economy according to the study. The research shows that residents of Clark and Floyd Counties spent an additional \$28.7 million with local tourism-related businesses helping to create 442 jobs within the two counties. The Certec study shows that in total, 5,261 jobs are directly

attributable to tourism spending in 2008 as compared to 5,166 in 2007.

“The study reinforces what the bureau has said all along,” says Clark-Floyd Counties Convention-Tourism Bureau Executive Director Jim Keith. “Our location along I-65 and the fact that we are part of the Louisville metropolitan area have helped us do well during the down-turn in the economy.”

Keith notes that fully one-third of the jobs created by tourism spending qualify as “high wage occupations.” Tourism-related jobs in the Clark-Floyd Counties region have a cumulative annual payroll of \$75.8 million, a figure that is up from \$70.2 million in 2007, the study shows.

Far and away, the top areas of spending continue to be for food and beverages, shopping, and transportation expenditures. “Nearly three out of every four dollars

spent fall into these categories,” Keith says. He notes that 36 percent of visitor spending is on food and beverage alone and

says, “This is a tribute to our many offerings, particularly those located on Restaurant Row in Jeffersonville and Veterans Parkway in Clarksville.

The Certec study concludes in its report, “Tourism is a large, growing business in Clark and Floyd Counties.”

Keith says 10 percent of visitor spending is on lodging. An innkeeper’s tax on hotel stays is the source that funds tourism promotion in the two-county area. A 2009 Ball State University study shows “Each dollar spent on tourism promotion and marketing by Indiana’s

convention and visitors bureau generates roughly \$15 in taxable revenues, creating jobs in a sometimes overlooked industry, says a new report by Ball State University.”

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Jim Keith
Executive Director
Clark-Floyd Counties CVB

Keith notes that using the innkeeper’s tax means that no local tax dollars are spent to bring the 15:1 return on investment back to the local community.

The Certec study reinforces the 2009 Ball State report which shows innkeeper’s taxes and tourism marketing in Indiana produces a positive economic impact on nearly every county in the state, according to Michael Hicks, director of Ball State’s Center for Business and Economic Research.

“Tourism is sometimes overlooked as a major industry in Indiana, but it has a major economic impact,” Hicks said. “Thousands of people visit the state’s various attractions from around the country each year. The industry goes far beyond hotels and motels; it includes restaurants, retailers and manufacturing,” Hicks says. “The return on investment of 15 to 1 not only creates jobs but also supports state and local governments. In the end, tourism is a driving force in our state’s economy,” he added.

Keith points out that the Certec studies, generally done every two years, have consistently shown the Clark-Floyd Counties region receiving significant benefit from tourism related spending. “We need to continue to invest in tourism growth by marketing our area and supporting our hotels and attractions,” he said.