

The First Word

By Dawn Hiles

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Travel back in time to 1873 for just a moment. Springfield suffered from the effects of the Civil War. Losses sustained from years of fighting devastated neighbors and friends. The realities of a nation that had nearly come apart tempered the hope of people wishing for a better future.

Simply stated, the needs were great. At that time, the economy required a jump-start, and people needed a new vision for the future, one that would bring positive changes to the area. James and Charles Harwood, the Rev. Nathan Morrison and Samuel Drury formed what is now Drury University as an answer to much of what faced our community. These men were the first Drury entrepreneurs. They recognized a need and had the courage and conviction necessary to create a viable and sustainable solution. No doubt the journey was difficult, but their recognition of how an institution of higher education would enhance their community drove them to continue until Drury was established.

Today, Springfield is a community experiencing exciting growth with a vibrant entrepreneurial-based economy. This is not to say that our community is without pressing economic needs. However, the needs of today center on modern questions related to issues such as sustainability and competing in a global marketplace. The questions we face may be a bit different, but the answers will be found by following the same entrepreneurial spirit demonstrated by the founders of Drury University.

I adhere to the entrepreneurial definition given by Jack Stack, CEO of SRC Holdings: "Entrepreneurship is about the courage and conviction to face the future. It's about wanting to contribute and to make a difference. It is about the ability to handle diversity, an eagerness to learn and grow." Moreover, I believe that our forefathers adhered to this definition. In doing so, they created a legacy that continues to benefit all of us. I believe this vision will continue to guide us into the future as we collectively face our challenges with courage and conviction.



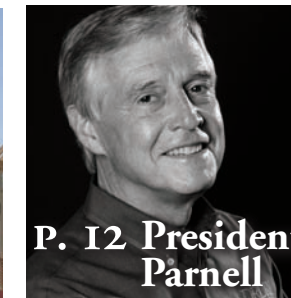
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