

# *The Circle*

*By Daniel P. Smith*

*From academics to athletics  
to food strikes to Vietnam protests,  
50 moments that help tell the story  
of a campus named after an  
expressway interchange*





*School Spirit, 1970*

1970 Yearbook

## FROM ITS VERY BEGINNING,

the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle was distinctive. Take its location. It wasn't one of those state universities sprawled across a vast expanse of land hundreds of miles away from a major city, but was planted on 105 acres smack dab near the thrumming hustle and bustle of Chicago's West Loop. The school opened not with a few hundred students and a couple of classroom buildings, but fully formed with six lecture centers, almost a dozen classroom buildings, a library, engineering labs, a recreation center and elevated walkways. It had an administrative office tower whose design was a proud "shout out" to Carl Sandburg's description of Chicago as "City of the Big Shoulders," and all of that was built not over decades, but in a few years. The 5,400 students who walked through the newly opened doors were a down payment on an anticipated student body of 32,000.

Chicago Circle's Brutalist architecture—vast quantities of concrete, granite and glass—stood in sharp contrast to the gothic architecture found on the campuses of Northwestern and the University of Chicago. The unpolished look and feel of the buildings further reinforced the campus' blue-collar ambition, to be a place where the commuting masses could better themselves through higher education. Nobody's coat of arms was chiseled in the archways here.



By any standard of measurement, Chicago Circle was a success. Student enrollment climbed to 20,000 in less than a decade, making it one of the nation's fastest growing campuses. Undergraduate and graduate programs were added, doctorate degrees awarded and Rhodes Scholars honored.

During the 1960s, the ever-growing student body became enmeshed in the Civil Rights movement, the Vietnam War debate and the rest of that turbulent decade's events. The lively atmosphere and convenient downtown Chicago location attracted public figures ranging from political candidates such as Dan Walker to entertainers like Sammy Davis Jr.

Thriving and dynamic during the day, Chicago Circle was different after dark. A "gentlemen's agreement" with DePaul, Loyola University Chicago and other schools prevented Chicago Circle from offering evening courses. The result was a campus that turned into a ghost town after 4 p.m. The easy commute that encouraged people to come to the school from all over Chicagoland discouraged them from sticking around at the end of the day to participate in school-related groups and activities, stunting the camaraderie and school spirit typical of the college experience. With sports teams and other activities to attract its students' energies, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign cast an enormous shadow over Chicago Circle, both as a competitor for increasingly scarce public resources and academic standing and prestige.

Perhaps the biggest challenge Chicago Circle faced was in defining its identity. Was it "Harvard on Halsted Street" with strong academic and research standards or a mass-scale community college, open to anyone who applied? The latter strategy gained the upper hand in the early 1970s, but not for long. By the 1980s, Chicago Circle had found its calling card as a comprehensive public research university, with an emphasis on tackling issues that confronted urban areas throughout the nation and the world.

In 1982, newly installed University of Illinois President Stanley Ikenberry announced plans to merge Chicago Circle with its Near West Side neighbor, the University of Illinois Medical Campus, creating a Tier I federal research institution: the University of Illinois at Chicago. The name Chicago Circle faded into the history books. In the mid-1990s, a campus-wide renovation removed many of the Walter Netsch's architectural elements.

But Chicago Circle lives on through the thousands of alumni who braved the blustery commutes, juggled a full-class schedule with part-time and full-time jobs, and earned their degrees from a place where the education gained was as much about what was learned in the classroom as what was experienced on the streets.

So whether you called it The Circle, Circle Campus or just plain Circle, here is a compendium of 50 moments in the institution's rich and diverse history. Some moments are significant, some are trivial. Taken together, however, they help illustrate why Chicago Circle was unique.



## HARVARD ON THE ROCKS

With millions of World War II veterans pursuing higher education through the G.I. Bill, the University of Illinois opens a two-year branch at Chicago's Navy Pier in 1946. Nicknamed "Harvard on the Rocks" and disparagingly referred to as "dockside," the students joke that it's the only campus capable of being sunk by a German U-boat. In its debut year more than 4,000 students enroll in one of the Chicago Undergraduate Division's four colleges— Liberal Arts and Sciences, Engineering, Commerce and Business Administration, and Physical Education. Some 75,000 students pass through Navy Pier during its 19-year run. No periscopes are ever sighted.



## STUDENT LIFE AT NAVY PIER

Sharing space with the U.S. Navy and the Chicago Police Dept.'s Traffic Division, students at Navy Pier crack their books in overcrowded conditions amid such odd distractions as foghorns and seagulls. However, they do enjoy some elements of "normal" collegiate life, including student clubs, homecoming and the "Miss Navy Pier" competition.







*Students create a mile-long petition!*

### 3 STUDENTS RALLY IN SUPPORT OF A NEW CAMPUS

After two years of taking classes at Navy Pier, students at the Chicago Undergraduate Division had to transfer to a four-year institution to complete their degrees. The cost of such a transfer gives rise to demands for a permanent University of Illinois campus

in Chicago, one of only three major U.S. cities still lacking a four-year publicly supported university.

Throughout the 1950s, students hold public rallies and even create a mile-long petition calling on officials to create a new campus. In a 1953 visit to Navy Pier,

University of Illinois President George Stoddard attempts to squelch the rising outcry, even inviting 2,000 Navy Pier students to visit "Urbana and see your campus." As student frustration intensifies, Stoddard grows angry and reportedly tells students, "I made you with the stroke of a pen, and I can unmake you by the stroke of a pen."



### DA MARE

Enter Richard J. Daley, who is destined to play the greatest role in establishing the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle. Recalling his struggle to put himself through law school at night, Ill. State Representative Daley begins his fight to bring a University of Illinois campus to Chicago with an Illinois House resolution in 1936. When he becomes Chicago's mayor in 1955, Daley intensifies his calls for a comprehensive public research university in Chicago, and over the next decade, wheels and deals this objective into reality. He considers the creation of Chicago Circle one of his political life's principal accomplishments.



## The Netsch Campus

**ARCHITECT WALTER NETSCH GAVE CHICAGO CIRCLE A ONE-OF-A-KIND APPEARANCE AND FUNCTIONALITY**



Architectural modernism had arrived on the Near West Side of Chicago with the opening of the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle. Distinctly different from the rest of the neighborhood, Chicago's newest university combined granite, concrete and brick in a style known as Brutalism, from the French *béton brut* or raw concrete. "Its concrete, steel and glass design against a highly contrasted neighborhood skyline leaves little doubt that this is Chicago of the future, Chicago on the move and Chicago the beautiful," boasted the *Chicago Illini*. UICC was the creation of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

### 5 A PERMANENT CAMPUS

The skeptical George Stoddard is succeeded as University president by David Dodds Henry (1955-1971). Recognizing the nation's swelling appetite for higher education, Henry advocates for the University's expan-

sion. Undeterred by a failed 1958 bond issue, Henry and his fellow expansionists return in 1960 with a \$195 million bond resolution that earmarks \$50 million for the creation of a Chicago campus. This time, city voters help pass the bond, prompting one of the





architect Walter Netsch, whose strikingly modern Cadet Chapel at the U.S. Air Force Academy had opened just three years earlier. Charged with designing a campus to accommodate as many as 32,000 students on the relatively modest 105-acre site at Harrison and Halsted, Netsch devised a master plan that incorporated a second-story “pedestrian expressway system” to facilitate movement and activity.

In locating campus buildings, Netsch drew upon the metaphor of a stone dropped in a pond of water, grouping lecture centers in a close circle at the central core. Beyond them to the east and west were the student union and the library, while offices and laboratories rose even further from the center. Athletic fields were in the outermost ring.

At the heart of the campus stood a two-story classical amphitheater known as Circle Forum, where students assembled for concerts, performances and protests. In addition, the roofs of the surrounding buildings formed a vast plaza called the Great Court. Second-story walk-

ways tied this central structure to the rest of the built campus.

The most visible symbol of the revolutionary campus design was the 28-story office tower, University Hall. Borrowing from Carl Sandburg’s reference to Chicago as “City of the Big Shoulders,” Netsch designed “big shoulders” into his most prominent campus structure, which expands in width as it rises in height.

Seeking to move beyond “the boredom of the box,” Netsch also experimented with “Field Theory”—a new design that rotated squares into geometric shapes radiating outward from a central core, as typified by the Behavioral Sciences Building. Field Theory was his signature contribution to architecture.

Many elements of Netsch’s modernist architecture remain to this day. However, his overarching vision was dramatically altered in the 1990s with the dismantling of the walkways and Circle Forum. —Eileen M. Tanner

Take a virtual walking tour of the Historic Netsch Campus at [www.uic.edu/depts/oa/walkingtour/](http://www.uic.edu/depts/oa/walkingtour/).



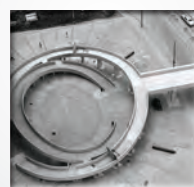
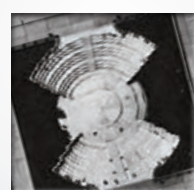
great civic questions of the day: where to put the school? Five sites receive serious consideration: the Riverside Golf

Course and Miller Meadows (both near the city’s western suburbs), Meigs Field, Garfield Park and the railroad

terminals south of the Loop in Chicago itself. With significant prodding by Mayor Daley, University trustees instead select a 105-acre, federal-urban-renewal project site southwest of the intersection of Harrison and Halsted Streets.

## 6 NEIGHBORHOOD PROTESTS

Trustees select the Harrison-Halsted site in 1960, but community stakeholders object. Florence Scala, a lifelong resident of the Little Italy neighborhood slated to be demolished by the school, leads marches on City Hall and later files suit to block the project. In May 1963, the U.S. Supreme Court declines to hear the activists’ appeal, clearing the way for campus construction. In an important concession, Scala and her followers manage to persuade University trustees to preserve Hull House, the residence of Jane Addams and Ellen Starr, and the settlement’s dining hall.



## 7 WALTER NETSCH

In 1961, the University hires Chicago-based Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and its internationally acclaimed architect Walter Netsch to design the new Chicago campus. Projected enrollment: 32,000 students. A native of Chicago’s South Shore neighborhood and designer of the U.S. Air Force Academy campus in Colorado Springs, Netsch develops 20 different concepts before devising a revolutionary design inspired by a drop of water in a pond (see sidebar, “The Netsch Campus”).



## DEMOLITION

*An estimated 8,000 residents from 1,900 families and 650 individual establishments are displaced by campus construction. Resentment lingers for decades.*



## 9 INSTANT CAMPUS

Construction commences in 1963, highlighted by a ceremonial groundbreaking event that includes the placement of a historical marker and time capsule. The first phase of construction delivers the essentials: the lecture centers, the library, seven classroom buildings, the north section of the Science and Engineering Laboratory, and the 28-story administrative building, University Hall. Subsequent phases are planned over a five-year period beginning in 1966, including Science and Engineering offices, the Architecture & Arts Building, the Physical Education Building, the UIC Theatre and the Behavioral Sciences Building. BSB's maze-like structure represents Netsch's burgeoning interest in the geometrically inspired "Field Theory" of architecture.

Concerned with practicality over polish, Netsch's Brutalist style favors sturdy, accessible materials such as concrete, brick, stone and solid granite sourced from Minnesota quarries. Although some critics deride the Netsch design as cold and harsh (one dubs the campus "Fortress Illini"), his effort earns him several prestigious architectural honors, including a total design award from the National Society of Interior Designers.



# 10

**WHAT'S IN A NAME, PART I**

*"We were the only major University named after an expressway interchange."*

*—Sylvia Manning, UIC Chancellor (1999–2007)*



# 11

## OPENING DAY

Braving single-digit temperatures and fierce winds, Mayor Daley, Illinois Governor Otto Kerner, University President Henry, Chancellor Norman Parker and other dignitaries come out on Feb. 22, 1965, to

celebrate the opening of the University of Illinois Chicago Circle campus. With the snipping of the ceremonial ribbon, energized students respond with cheers.

With six colleges and a budget of \$12.8 million, Circle welcomes 5,415 students for its spring term.

By fall, enrollment jumps past 8,600, and Circle joins the ranks of the nation's fastest growing universities.



*Richard J. Daley*



# 14

## MODEL CAMPUS

In February 1966, Dr. Clark Kerr, president of the University of California—a complex and growing system in its own right—makes a special inspection visit to Circle. Impressed, Kerr declares UICC the “pioneer model for educational facilities in large cities.”

# 12

## NORMAN PARKER

The head of the mechanical engineering department at the University of Illinois' flagship campus in Urbana, Norman Parker is appointed vice president of the Chicago Undergraduate Division at Navy Pier in 1961 and tasked with leading the development of the Circle campus. Leaving faculty recruitment

to the individual college deans, the Colorado-born Parker focuses construction on the campus' physical plant. A noted consensus builder, Parker becomes the University's first chancellor.



Bill Hawes, far right.

## Opening day

### BILL HAWES

*At the ribbon-cutting ceremony commemorating the opening of the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle held Feb. 22, 1965, Bill Hawes '68 ENG, MS '69 ENG stood in the middle of the action. An Army ROTC cadet, Hawes held one end of the orange ribbon that dignitaries, including Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley, would cut to mark the official debut of Chicago Circle campus.*

*Hawes, a member of Circle's first graduating class of engineers, reflects on that memorable day.*

It was blind luck that I was even in that spot on stage. It was such a bitterly cold day that one of the cadets asked to be relieved, so I filled in.

After the ceremony, we ROTC cadets collected the ribbon and went inside. We cut the ribbon into small segments and each of us took a piece home. I kept that ribbon for some 25-30 years before I passed it on to the University of Illinois Alumni Association. Later, some of that ribbon was put into a plaque, which was presented to the Richard J. Daley family.

Besides the bitter cold, the thing I most remember about that day was how much excitement and energy was created by this brand-new urban campus. There was a total shift in attitude among the students. Whereas Navy Pier felt like a junior college to most of us, a place you'd go before finishing up at a different four-year university, Circle's opening changed that thinking. We were no longer in a temporary situation [and] so many of us felt we had new opportunities put before us.

—As told to Daniel P. Smith

# 13

## CONGRESS CIRCLE?

In 1961, University trustees name the new campus University of Illinois Congress Circle. But when the Chicago City Council renames the multi-expressway interchange “Chicago Circle” in 1964, school leaders feel compelled to modify the now obsolete name.



1976 Yearbook



## 15 QUARTERS ONLY

In Autumn 1965, Chicago Circle divides its academic calendar into four 10-week quarters, similar to other Chicago-area universities such as DePaul and the University of Chicago. More than 1,000 semester-length courses are reconfigured to reflect the shorter term.



## 18 MUDDY EXISTENCE

Long after its opening, the campus remains a work in progress. The ongoing construction work and absence of landscaping restrict campus travelers to the upper level of the two-level sidewalks. Those who dare take a street-level detour often find themselves traipsing through mud and gravel.



## 19 CAMPUS' HEART

Just as Netsch expected, Circle Forum becomes the heart of the UICC campus. The two-story classical amphitheater serves as a popular meeting spot, lunch destination and entertainment complex. The first

play staged in the Circle Forum (October 1965) is Sophocles' tragedy *Antigone*. It is performed in Greek and features residents from the nearby Greektown neighborhood.



## 20 UNFAIR COMPETITION

To bring a public university to Chicago, officials enter into a number of "gentlemen's agreements" with the city's private colleges, including DePaul, Loyola and IIT, pledging not to offer night classes, and placing limits on campus housing and professional degree programs. Therefore, even though Netsch's design incorporates extensive exterior lighting, the campus is virtually deserted after dark.

## 21 WELCOME TO CIRCLE

Incoming students acclimate to campus life during Freshmen Weekends in the fall. These off-campus retreats include games and activities, as well as presentations by school administrators and campus organizations.



# 16

## THE ZEROS

In June 1966, UICC graduates its "Zeroeth" class, a collection of 192 seniors receiving degrees in liberal arts and sciences, and business administration. The majority of the graduates had collected enough course credits at Navy Pier to be classified as "accidental juniors" upon Circle's opening.

## 17 SNOWBOUND

Historic blizzards paralyze the campus. The January 1967 "Storm of the Century" brings a record 23 inches of snowfall and 50 mile-per-hour winds to the city, stranding more than 200 students on campus for the night.

Twelve years later, in January 1979, another storm drops 20 inches of snow on Chicago, forcing the school to suspend operations for a full week, and subtracting a full tenth from the 10-week quarter. Instructors are told to use the scheduled final-exam week for teaching and to leave the question of final exams to their own good judgment.





# 22

## INCOMPLETES

Although slated to be finished in four phases, construction of many of the planned buildings on the Chicago Circle campus is halted. Budget cutbacks eliminate planned additions to the Architecture & Arts building and the library, Netsch's addition to Science and Engineering South, and Project Y—the secret name given to a campus theatre complex modeled after New York City's Lincoln Center.



## The Urban Mission

**FOR MUCH OF ITS 17-YEAR EXISTENCE, CHICAGO CIRCLE STRUGGLED TO DEFINE ITS PURPOSE**

The quest for public higher education in Chicago has had a long history. When President Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Act, which provided grants for “the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes” in “agriculture and the mechanic arts,” Chicago made an unsuccessful attempt to secure the “mechanic arts” program for the city. Instead, state legislators in 1867 opted for a single campus, the University of Illinois, in Urbana. A second Morrill Act in 1890, along with the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, provided grants for agricultural research and rural extension programs. But funding for an urban campus remained elusive.

In 1944, Congress passed the G.I. Bill, which provided federal funding to veterans for higher education, and land-grant universities such as U of I expanded into cities. Popular demand for urban-based, public higher education shaped university planning, resulting in calls in the late 1950s for “urban grant universities”—although federal funding analogous to the Morrill Act was not forthcoming. Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley was instrumental in gaining state funds for a Chicago campus of the University of Illinois, stressing its proximity to public transportation and downtown opportunities for faculty-city connections.

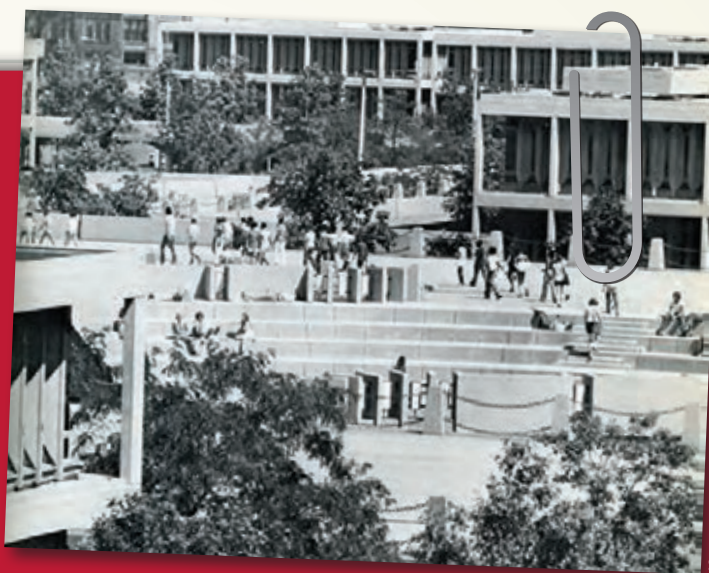
The University of Illinois at Chicago Circle campus opened in early 1965, with strong programs in engineering, architecture and the sciences, as well as a focus on the humanities and social sciences. Undefined, however, was its primary mission. Was UICC to be a comprehensive research university similar to its Urbana namesake? Or was it to be a more narrowly defined urban institution, one emphasizing access and service to inner-city students?

During its first five years, Chicago Circle was the nation's fastest growing campus, with student enrollment increasing nearly fourfold.

UICC quickly expanded its undergraduate and graduate programs, and added a new college in urban planning. It also reached out to inner-city and minority students through its Education Assistance Program, which emphasized diversity and access. Circle's rapid growth initially enabled it to avoid hard questions about its core mission, but severe financial cutbacks during the mid-1970s forced the issue. When UICC Chancellor Warren Cheston sought to limit the campus' research agenda and implement open admissions, the faculty revolted. His ouster swung the pendulum in the opposite direction, leading to evening courses, stricter admissions standards and expanded basic research on urban problems.

In 1979, Stanley Ikenberry

became the University's new president, advancing an agenda that included merging UICC with the University of Illinois Medical Center. He also rejected a remedial and limited mission, declaring that “it ought to be our urban mission to become the very strongest university that we could possibly become in the inner city of Chicago.” By the 1980s, UIC had developed a new model for higher education, fulfilling the land-grant ideal in an urban environment, reconciling the visions of diversity, access and opportunity, with an emphasis on basic fundamental research in urban, regional and national issues. In the process, UIC became one of the nation's leading comprehensive, urban research universities. —Fred W. Beuttler



1974 Yearbook

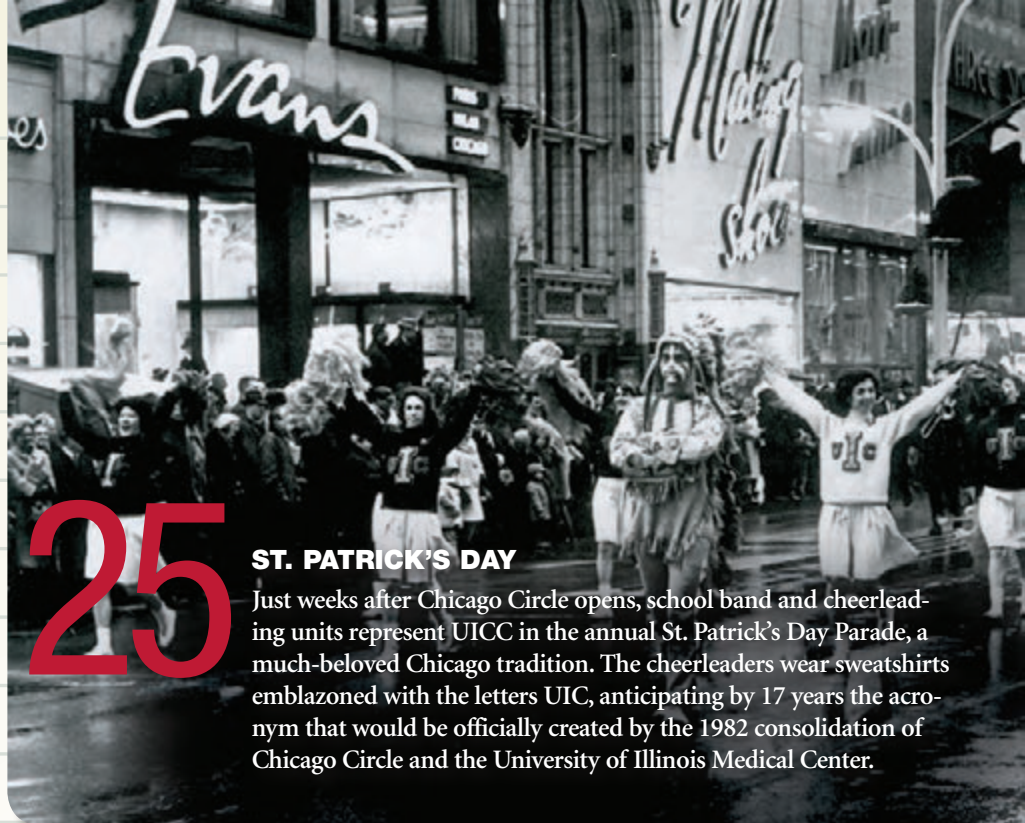


## 23 GRADUATION CEREMONY

On June 18, 1967, the 808 members of UICC's first graduating class receive their diplomas in front of 5,000 attendees at the Chicago Stadium. Commencement Speaker Byron R. White, U.S. Supreme Court Justice, challenges the students to solve urban problems. "You have inherited a rich, powerful country," he says. "The duties of today can be the opportunities of tomorrow."

## 24 PH.D. APPROVED

Chicago Circle begins to offer doctoral degrees in history, philosophy, mathematics and chemistry in 1968. The following summer, chemistry student **Sidney Frederick Bosen PHD '69** LAS defends his thesis and earns UICC's first Ph.D. degree.



## ST. PATRICK'S DAY

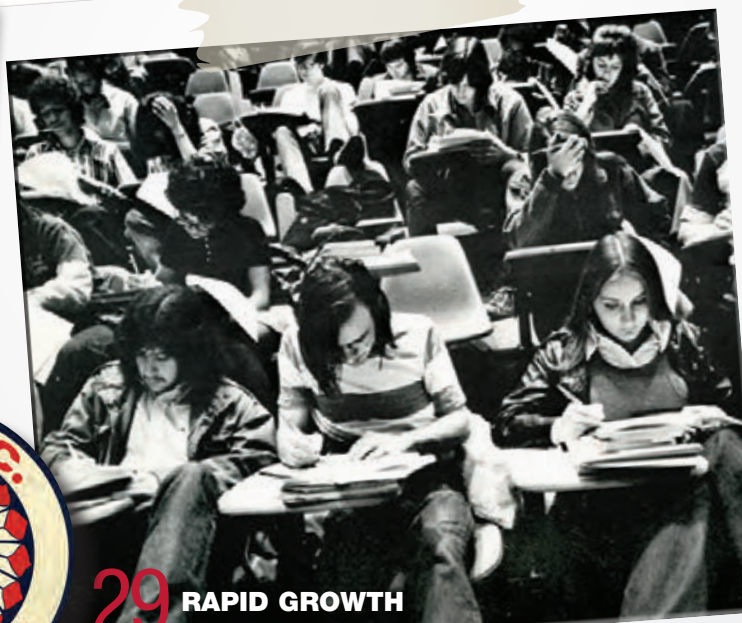
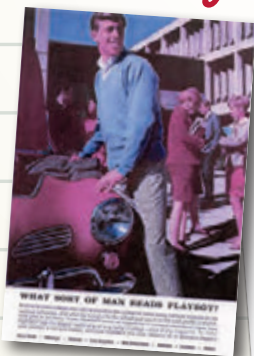
Just weeks after Chicago Circle opens, school band and cheerleading units represent UICC in the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade, a much-beloved Chicago tradition. The cheerleaders wear sweatshirts emblazoned with the letters UIC, anticipating by 17 years the acronym that would be officially created by the 1982 consolidation of Chicago Circle and the University of Illinois Medical Center.

# 26 HISTORY GRANT

*In Summer 1966, Chicago Circle hosts its first Institute for Advanced Study in Negro History, a six-week summer course designed to prepare secondary school educators to teach African American history.*

## 27 PLAYBOY EXPOSURE

University Hall serves as the backdrop for *Playboy's* "Back to Campus" fashion spread in the September 1966 issue. Circle makes a return appearance a year later in the magazine's long-running "What Sort of Man Reads Playboy" advertisement.



## RAPID GROWTH

*Ending its eye-popping climb, Chicago Circle's enrollment peaks at 19,991 students in 1972.*



## 28 WHAT'S IN A NAME, PART II

Perhaps inspired by the Top 40 song *CC Rider*, Circle students select C.C. Raiders as their school nickname in a 1965 campus-wide vote. Athletic Director Walter Versen nullifies their selection and retains the Chikas name, first installed at the Navy Pier campus. "Chikas" references the Chickasaw Indian Nation, which developed its own calendar and numerical system.

1973 Yearbook





## 32 MEMBERS ONLY

In 1968, UICC earns NCAA membership for athletic competition in Division III. Climbing the ranks of collegiate athletics, the school joins NCAA Division II for the 1975-76 season and earns Division I status in 1981.

## 30 FOOD FIGHT

In February 1966, UICC student government officers lead their peers in a boycott of food facilities in the Chicago Circle Center. More than 200 students carry signs protesting low quality and high prices. Within two weeks, student leaders claim victory. Among the notable improvements: made-to-order hamburgers.

## SAMMY

On Oct. 18, 1968, at the height of his fame, Sammy Davis Jr. visits the Chicago Circle campus and speaks with African American students. The legendary entertainer surprises the audience by announcing that he has established a fund for scholarships to be awarded to black students at Circle and other Chicago-area universities.



## 34 KENT STATE

After a U.S. military incursion into Cambodia leads to protests that result in the killing of four students at Kent State University in Ohio, Chicago-area student protests intensify. During a May 6 campus strike, dozens of students occupy the Roosevelt Road Building. Forty-one students—the so-called Circle 41—are arrested for trespassing.

As dissension deepens, UICC Dean of Students Oscar Miller shuts down the campus for a week. He opens the Architecture & Arts Building as a strike center for student groups. Miller's conciliatory approach likely saves the campus from the uprisings that befall other colleges.

## 33 VIETNAM WAR

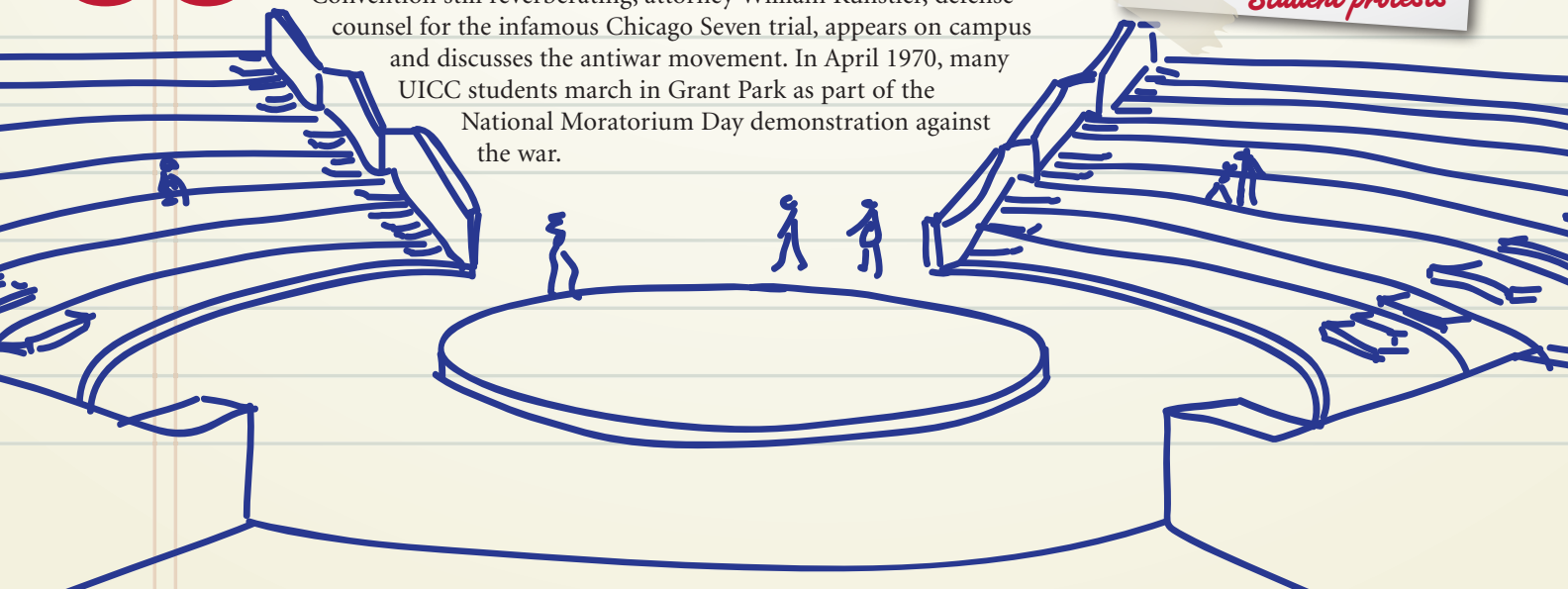
On Dec. 22, 1968, Army specialist Justin K. Anderson, class of 1967, is killed in action near Tay Ninh, Vietnam. Anderson is the first known Chicago Circle graduate to lose his life in military action.



*Student protests*

## 35 ANTI-WAR PROTESTS

Starting in the late 1960s and lingering into the 1970s, peace protests become a regular fixture on college campuses across the country, UICC included. In 1969, with shocks from the 1968 Democratic National Convention still reverberating, attorney William Kunstler, defense counsel for the infamous Chicago Seven trial, appears on campus and discusses the antiwar movement. In April 1970, many UICC students march in Grant Park as part of the National Moratorium Day demonstration against the war.





# 36

## GREEK LIFE

Even though the University of Illinois at Urbana boasts the nation's largest Greek system, school officials refuse to charter any fraternities or sororities at Circle, citing a local ordinance that limits the number of unrelated women who can live in a single residence. Undeterred, a group of students establish Pi Alpha Tau. One of the nation's first co-ed fraternities, the organization combines community service with frequent social events that help brighten the often alienating commuter campus environment.



1981 Yearbook



1987 Yearbook

## 38 JANE FONDA

In November 1972—just months after winning her first Academy Award and making a controversial, headline-grabbing visit to North Vietnam—actress Jane Fonda brings her campaign for peace to Circle campus.



## 37 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

*On June 15, 1975, at Chicago Stadium, commencement exercises for the Class of 1975 are held. Lloyd Zimmerman, Circle's first representative in Rhodes Scholar competition, serves as the student speaker.*



Courtesy of Jim Rees

## Gridiron Hero

### JIM REES RECALLS THE EARLY YEARS OF CHICAGO CIRCLE'S FOOTBALL PROGRAM

**Jim Rees '70** AHS is living proof that Chicago Circle once had a football team. Rees played defensive back from 1965-68, completing his collegiate career five years before University leaders dropped the program due to budget constraints.

Calling his Circle football career "a huge lesson in flexibility," Rees fondly remembers those gridiron days.

Playing football at Circle was a far cry from the big business of today's Division I football. Without athletic scholar-

ships, we were a team of walk-ons—and when we played games at Soldier Field, you could actually promise your friends a

seat on the 50-yard line. During my football career, we practiced at Grant Park, on the east side of Halsted Street

and on Harrison Street. We played our home games at stadiums across Chicago before settling into Soldier Field during the 1968 season.

On the field, we struggled during my freshman year, but improved every year thereafter, largely because so many of us gained experience playing as underclassmen. By my senior year, 15 of us had played together all four years.

With UICC being a commuter school, football created an important sense of belonging and introduced me to wonderful people. Coaches George Strnad '54 UI

and Hal Nemoto '57 UI, MS '61 UI both mentored me. Nemoto suggested I switch from history to kinesiology, a decision that led me to a rewarding career as a high school teacher and coach, while Strnad was influential in my being hired to teach at UICC.

Without Circle football, my life certainly would've traveled a different route. —As told to Daniel P. Smith



1968 Yearbook



39

**THE CHESTON ERA**

Warren Cheston succeeds Norman Parker as UICC chancellor in 1971; simultaneously, Chicago Circle's reputation falters. Once considered a "State College with Ivy League Standards," as a 1967 *Chicago Tribune* headline put it, Cheston stresses the campus' urban mission. His decision to reduce admissions standards and emphasize remedial education meets with opposition from outspoken faculty and students, who charge that the school's urban mission is to address problems of urban life with greater intellectual rigor, not more lenient admissions standards. During his fourth year, with the debate raging, Cheston leaves office; he later calls himself "the wrong man in the wrong place at the wrong time."

*Open Admissions*

1973 Yearbook

41

**URBAN DIVERSITY**

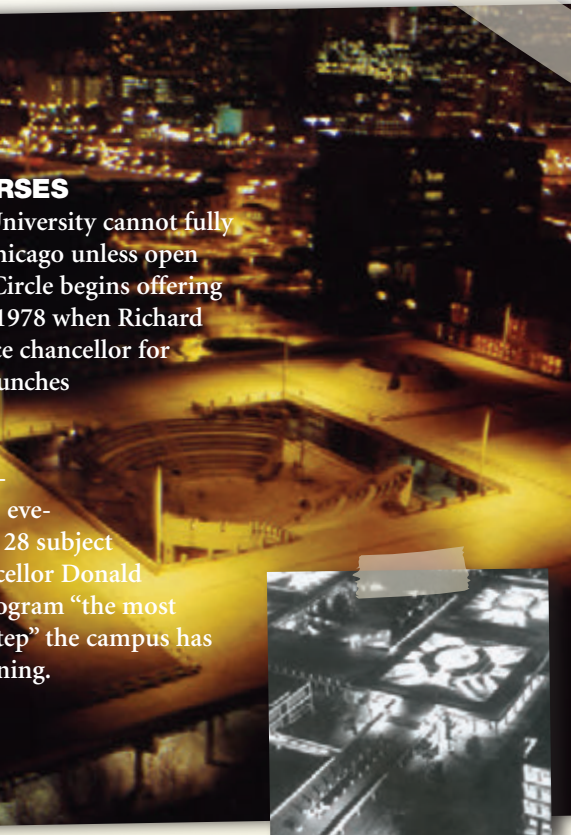
By the mid-1970s, the percentage of students of African American descent tops 20 percent, a significant increase over the 2 percent who were part of the increase that opened the school in 1965. The growth is credited in part to the Educational Assistance Program, which recruits, advises and tutors minority students from a range of backgrounds. Soon Chicago Circle becomes one of the nation's most diverse campuses, a status recognized annually with an International Day of Celebration.



42

**EVENING COURSES**

Arguing that the University cannot fully serve the city of Chicago unless open at night, Chicago Circle begins offering evening classes in 1978 when Richard Johnson, UICC vice chancellor for academic affairs, launches Program PM. Nearly 2,500 degree-seeking students enroll in 140 evening classes across 28 subject areas. UICC Chancellor Donald Riddle calls the program "the most important single step" the campus has taken since its opening.

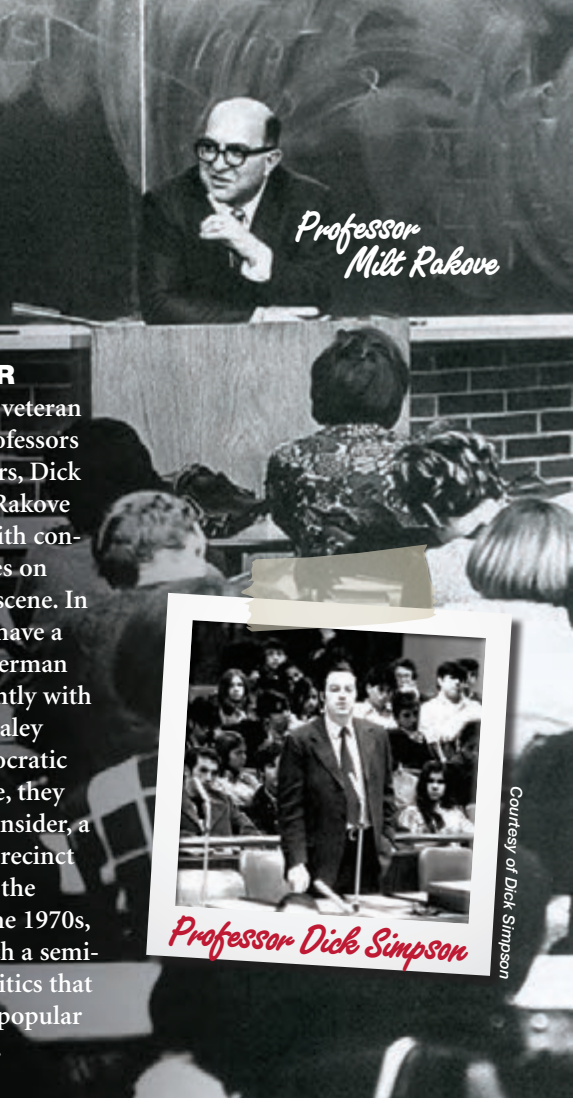


1992 Yearbook/Steve Litowsky

40

**OIL AND WATER**

An unlikely pair of veteran political science professors and political insiders, Dick Simpson and Milt Rakove provide students with contrasting perspectives on Chicago's political scene. In Simpson, students have a reform-minded alderman who clashes frequently with Mayor Richard J. Daley and the city's Democratic Machine. In Rakove, they get a consummate insider, a party loyalist and precinct captain who serves the Machine. During the 1970s, they pair up to teach a seminar on Chicago politics that is among the most popular courses on campus.

*Professor Milt Rakove**Professor Dick Simpson*

Courtesy of Dick Simpson

43

**AD-HOC EDUCATION**

Eager for learning, some students and Circle faculty create an ad hoc "Alternate University," introducing offbeat, unusual and sometimes countercultural classes in the late afternoon and evening. Among the offerings: "Civilian R.O.T.C."

44

**STANDARDS TIGHTEN**

With a freshmen dropout rate hovering near 30 percent, Chancellor Donald Riddle (1976-82) commissions a special committee of administrators, faculty and students to explore UICC's academic condition. Equipped with the committee's exhaustive analysis and recommendations, Riddle proposes tightening the University's admissions standards.

45

**BACK-TO-BACK NATIONAL CHAMPIONS**

Earning the campus' first national title in any sport, the UICC men's gymnastics squad captures the 1978 NCAA Division II Championship. The following year, Head Coach "CJ" Johnson's squad defends its reign as gymnast Daniel Smith captures the individual all-around championship.



# 46

## 47 FAST FOOD

The Great Circle Hall completes an 18-month renovation that results in the Inner Circle fast-food facility. Students can choose from 11 different dining options.



## THE MERGER

On Sept. 1, 1979, newly installed University President Stanley Ikenberry walks the mile-plus between Chicago Circle and the University of Illinois Medical Center to announce plans to consolidate the two campuses into one institution. After three years of laborious groundwork, as well as overcoming objections from UI-Urbana administrators and UIMC faculty, the University of Illinois at Chicago era officially begins on Sept. 1, 1982.



## LAST CLASS

**48** *The Circle era concludes on June 13, 1982, when UICC holds its final commencement at the Pavilion, the school's new 10,000-seat sports and entertainment arena.*



## 49 FARAWAY GALAXY

Established in 1973, UICC's Electronic Visualization Laboratory pioneers ways to manipulate video with a breakthrough, artist-centric computer language called GRASS, which allows users to write scripts for scaling, translation, rotation and color changes of 2D objects. As a visiting artist at Chicago Circle, computer animator Larry Cuba uses GRASS and the EVL to create the famous "Attacking the Death Star Will Not Be Easy" sequence in the 1977 *Star Wars* film.

## 50 WHAT'S IN A NAME, PART III

The Chicago Circle campus loses its namesake on Aug. 29, 2014, when the Circle Interchange is renamed the Jane Byrne Interchange in honor of Chicago's first and, thus far, only female mayor.

*We Love Circle!*

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**SOURCES:** *The University of Illinois at Chicago: A Pictorial History*; *The Historic Netsch Campus at the University of Illinois at Chicago*; *The Historic Medical Campus at the University of Illinois at Chicago*; *UIC Alumni*; *Chicago Tribune*

**IMAGES:** OUIHC Collection; All photos courtesy of UIC Archives unless otherwise noted