Let the Celebration BEGIN!

Rising Star Breakfast
Harrison Kicks Off 50th Anniversary with Speech to Business and Community Leaders

President Walter Harrison publicly launched the University’s 50th anniversary celebration on Feb. 13, when he addressed approximately 400 Greater Hartford business and community leaders—and a large contingent of University faculty, staff, students, and regents—at the MetroHartford Alliance’s Rising Star Breakfast.

The featured speaker for the event, Harrison traced the history of the University from its founding in 1957, when lack of appropriate space and growing enrollments after World War II caused the Hartford Art School, the Hartt College of Music, and the original Hillyer College to join forces.

Harrison’s speech was titled “A Private University with a Public Purpose,” which, he said, has defined the University’s mission since the founders decided to create a university for Hartford.

Describing the University today for his audience, Harrison spoke of its transformation from a commuter school to a residential one, from three initial schools to the seven schools and colleges of today, from farmland to a bustling and beautiful campus.

“[We are] a university distinguished by the visual and performing arts, centered on the liberal arts, and surrounded by professional schools—an unusual model, but it works very well here.”

In the last nine years, the University has recommitted itself “with a new vitality and energy to the mission its founders envisioned,” Harrison said. He cited University of Hartford Magnet School and University High School of Science and Engineering as two important initiatives that have increased the University’s connection with the region’s public schools.

Harrison said the University has also undertaken a renewed building program that has added important new academic buildings, such as the Integrated Science, Engineering, and Technology complex; a new residence hall; and many renovations to existing buildings.

In closing, Harrison said that the University has “much to celebrate on its 50th birthday: the vision of its founders, the support and encouragement of its local supporters and donors, the commitment of its staff and faculty, and the success of its alumni. But most of all, it celebrates the energy and vitality of its student body.”

As part of the 50th anniversary celebration, many photos taken by students, faculty, and staff during the University’s Day in the Life project last November were unveiled in Suisman Lounge on Feb. 20.

Visit www.hartford.edu/50th to see the Video Café and an interactive timeline featuring the University’s first 50 years.
Founders’ Day Fun

(Far left) Nearly 800 students packed the Chase Arena to watch the women’s basketball team’s 64-60 win over Boston University; (left) students from Hartt’s musical theatre program rocked and rolled to ’50s tunes; (right) ARAMARK employees served mini-hamburgers and hot dogs in Gengras Cafeteria; (far right) students enjoyed the root-beer floats and other ’50s food items on the menu.

(Left photo) Irene ’57 and Oliver ’58 Mclean (center) with their daughters Marlane ’92 (left) and Marsha ’82 (far right), and Marsha’s daughter, Gabrielle; (right photo) Director of Athletics Pat Meiser and President Harrison hold up jerseys signed by the men’s and women’s basketball teams. The shirts will go into a 50th anniversary time capsule to be buried on campus this fall.

(Left) The first 1,500 attendees to enter the Chase Arena for the BU game received free 50th anniversary T-shirts; (below left) attendance at the game was a near-record 2,511; (below) library employees dressed for the occasion; (bottom) the Residence Hall Association sponsored a dessert social in Konover Campus Center after the game.