

## **UMSL and Normandy: 50 years of Working Together**

Residents of Normandy, and all of St. Louis, had long recognized the need for affordable college level opportunities near home. There was talk in the Normandy about establishing a junior college for the school district. At the same time, in 1957, the Bellerive Country Club put up their club house and 128-acre club site in Normandy for sale, asking \$1,300,000. They knew of NSD's interest in establishing a junior college, so they went to school district officials to ask if they were interested in using their grounds. NSD officials weren't willing to pay \$1,300,000, but after some negotiations and some concessions on both sides, Bellerive lowered the price to \$600,000. Normandy voters passed a bond allowing the Normandy School District to purchase the land for this price. Under the terms of the agreement, Normandy had full use of the clubhouse and grounds on May 31, 1960.

Normandy's Board of Education appointed a "committee of 28," headed by Ed Monaco, to plan and develop the creation of a junior college. The committee went to the University of Missouri, which was responsible at the time for accrediting all junior colleges in the state. The University made an arrangement to provide teachers if Normandy would provide the physical facilities and the students. In September of 1960, the University of Missouri-Normandy Residence Center opened, with an enrollment of 180. So many students were applying that even though the enrollment jumped to 300 and then 550 in the following two years, students were still being turned away. The Normandy Board of Education recognized the possibility of the school becoming a four-year university. Not only would students have far greater education opportunities, but property values in the city of Normandy and surrounding areas would go up, and hundreds of jobs would be created. Some legal obstacles arose in transferring the property to the University of Missouri, and the Missouri Legislature had to pass a special act in order for

the transaction to take place. In 1963, the school officially became the University of Missouri-St. Louis, and construction began to accommodate the projected 25,000 students that would be attending by 1985.

UMSL and Normandy are partners in many projects, councils, and programs. UMSL was a voting member of the Normandy Municipal Council, along with the Normandy Ministerial Alliance and Normandy School District. Their motto was “to provide a unifying force to work for the common good and welfare of the entire area.” More recently, UMSL and Normandy became partners in the Students of Service program, in which UMSL students provide mentoring and tutoring for Normandy students. UMSL also provides services to over forty school districts in the St. Louis area, including Normandy, through the Bridge program. The Bridge program provides students with stimulating educational experiences, focusing especially on science and math, and prepares students for college.

In the 2011-2016 Normandy School District Transformation Plan, NSD officials listed UMSL as a strength and an opportunity. NSD utilizes UMSL for assistance with the curriculum and offers student-teaching opportunities to UMSL students. The city of Normandy and UMSL are also currently teaming up to redesign Natural Bridge Road, from University Drive on the west to Lucas and Hunt on the east. UMSL, Normandy, and North County Incorporated submitted a joint application for planning assistance from the St. Louis Great Streets Initiative. The plans include adding a median with grass and trees, expanding sidewalks to encourage pedestrian use, and adding bicycle lanes. The goal is to make Normandy more walkable, which will attract more people to visit Normandy to shop or eat. If Normandy thrives, UMSL thrives; that principle has guided and will guide the interactions of these two entities for years to come.