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THE THIRTEENTH DECADE



***Lloyd I. Watkins
Thirteenth President
1977-1988***

THE
THIRTEENTH
DECADE

Illinois State University

1977-1987

By Roger J. Champagne

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PREFACE

This is the third volume in the decadal histories of Illinois State University. Helen Marshall, after the publication of her comprehensive *The Grandest of Enterprises: Illinois State Normal University, 1857-1957*, continued her history of the institution in a small volume covering the years 1957-67. For reasons that escape me, it was decided that I should continue the "series" by preparing a history of the twelfth decade, which appeared in 1978 as *A Place of Education*. This volume is for the decade 1977-1987. Histories of American universities, covering long periods of time, are commonplace, which makes this series rather unusual. Researching and writing the last twenty years of Illinois State University's history has been a unique experience. One outcome of that special experience, reinforced by 29 years of observation as an ISU faculty member, is the belief that the University's long history has given it an institutional life of its own. It is true, of course, that certain individuals made a difference at given moments in the University's development. Yet students, faculty, and administrators come and go, and even the best are quickly forgotten as others take their places. What remains is an institution that continues to function, sometimes prosperously, at other times slightly frayed, but functioning always and moving ahead in one way or another as it has for over 130 years. Whatever judgments others might reach, I believe the decadal volumes are useful as an institutional memory of the past, reminding administrators, faculty, and students alike of earlier accomplishments and failures as they face the challenges of the future.

The major focus of this volume is on the issues of academic quality, funding, and direction which confronted Illinois State

University during its thirteenth decade. The period covered is that of the presidency of Lloyd I. Watkins, who served the University for eleven years from 1977 to 1988. Among all presidents since 1857, only four were in office longer, and in recent times only one, Robert G. Bone, equalled Watkins' tenure. In one sense this is a history of the "Watkins' Years," but it is not hagiography. Instead, I have tried to see the University in the broadest perspective possible. My task was made easier because of the assistance of a number of people. I am grateful to President Watkins and David Strand, Vice President and Provost, for their support and to Neal Gamsky, Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs, for encouraging me to undertake the project before my retirement. I appreciated the interest and prompt help of Cheryl Young, Nancy Hiltibidal, Val Witten, Betty Zimmerman, Roger Cushman, and Laura Gowdy, who know where the records are and made them readily available to me. A special thanks is due David Strand, Charles Morris, Jude Boyer, Gerlof Homan, William Linneman, Christy Price, Arlan Richardson, and Hibbert Roberts for the loan of materials. The manuscript was improved because of the reading and comments of Lloyd Watkins, Mark Plummer, Shailer Thomas, and William Linneman.

June 1989

Roger J. Champagne