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## **Founders' Day, 125th anniversary are hits for the Ferris family**

BIG RAPIDS – Founders' Day is one of the great traditions that at Ferris State University and one that has endured for years as people come together to honor what Woodbridge Ferris and Helen Gillespie Ferris started 125 years ago in 1884.

Thursday was an extra-special Founders' Day as not only did the University community come together to honor Woodbridge and Helen, it also gathered together to kick off the celebration of Ferris' 125th anniversary as an institution.

Founders' Day 2009 featured activities ideal for faculty, staff and students of Ferris as well as for members of the Big Rapids community who wanted to be part of the history Ferris has created during its first 125 years.

“This is great and very exciting. I went to school here back in the 1960s, and Ferris means a lot to me and to be here on the 125th ... I never thought I would be able to participate at this level with the celebration,” said R. Thomas Cook, chair of the Ferris State University Board of Trustees. “But, it’s wonderful to see the campus, a beautiful day, and the attitude of everybody is great.”

Included among the Founders' Day activities was a special commemorative stamp cancellation ceremony that took place, a welcome back picnic for faculty and staff, good food for students, a 125th all-campus photograph, a panel discussion of the history of Ferris, a treasure hunt, a vintage photo event for those who wanted to be pictured with Woodbridge Ferris, a cake and ice cream social, signings of the commemorative 125th book and much more.

One of the overarching themes of those who attended the 125th celebration was how great a role Ferris has played in the lives of so many people over the years.

“I spent 26 years teaching at Ferris before I retired four years ago and have kept contact with the University through my presidency of the Emeriti Association,” said Brenda Vasicek, who serves as president of the Ferris Emeriti Association. “I think Ferris has been such a big part of my life that it is a joy to come back here and to continue to learn so much more about it.

“Ferris is a unique campus with smaller class sizes and so much more of a community atmosphere which is one of the legacies of Woodbridge Ferris. The notion of constantly reaching out and helping each other to achieve is especially important in a struggling economy,” Vasicek added.

To learn more about the rich history of Ferris State University, its founders and more, visit

the official 125th Web site at [www.ferris.edu/125](http://www.ferris.edu/125).



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