Sesquicentennial Weekend, October 12-15, was by all accounts the biggest and best celebration in the University’s 150-year history.

On the River Campus, over 7,000 participants—alumni, faculty and staff, students, and parents—enjoyed a festive array of well over 100 events designed, as the Sesqui theme suggests, to “celebrate the past and imagine the future.” Meanwhile, the Medical Center was observing the 75th anniversary of its founding and Eastman School alumni gathered for their triennial reunion.

The Sesquicentennial Convocation on October 14 at Eastman Theatre offered both a look back at where the University has been and a glimpse into what it may become. Over 1,000 were in attendance at the event that premiered a new composition by Jeff Tyzik, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra pops conductor and a graduate of the Eastman School.

The Convocation included keynote addresses by University President Thomas Jackson, University Trustee Paula Brownlee, Eastman Kodak Co. chairman George Fisher, and Pulitzer Prize-winning presidential historian Doris Kearns Goodwin. President Jackson spoke of how the University was established and predicted where it—and higher education in general—might be headed. He said he envisions an end to major expansion, a continuation of a highly competitive environment, and, in spite of the Internet, a bright future for the residential college. “But if I have a robust prediction, at least in my view,” he said, “the major features of the campus, and particularly of the undergraduate education, will look much the same 50 years from now.”

Many of the seminars and panel discussions on the River Campus focused on the years that lie ahead. The future of higher education, academic medical centers, space exploration, the motion picture industry, and sports all offered fodder for lively discussion as did other topics of interest, ranging from religion to evolution, successful aging to child development, and quantum physics to computers.

The next few pages of this special commemorative insert to Currents capture some of the moments of delight, discovery, and fun from Sesquicentennial Weekend during which the University community came together to “celebrate the past and imagine the future.”
“Nothing creates more long-term hope or promise.”

--George Eastman, via an imaginary e-mail to Eastman Kodak
“Sports provided a way for me to identify with the world.”

--Donna de Varona, chair, Women’s World Cup Organizing Committee,
“Celebrating 150 Years of Sports”

“[If one rolls back the clock 150 years, it is hardly possible that those citizens of Rochester, as farsighted as they may have been, or Martin Brewer Anderson, the first president of this University, as smart as he may have been, could have foreseen the University of today.]”

--President Thomas Jackson, Sesquicentennial Convocation

“Computing the future: Microsoft v.p. Richard Rashid ’80 (PhD) points out that by 2003 you could conceivably store all the conversations you’ve ever had in a device no bigger than a single drive in a PC.”

President-watcher: Doris Kearns Goodwin, speaking at the “Privacy and the Media” session, confessed to once passing up a scoop on Jimmy Carter’s “lustings in the heart” because, from the angle she was reporting on, “I couldn’t fit it into my category.”

“Onward and upward: NASA Chief Dan Goldin offers a glimpse of the future “out there.” The next generation coming up, he predicted, will “open up the heavens.”

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Optics professors Nick Bigelow (left) and Ian Walmsley pointed out that the esoteric new field of quantum optics was, arguably, invented at Rochester.

“Instant landmark: The newly-named-and-landscaped Dandelion Square with its distinctive clock (dedicated during the weekend in honor of trustee and former BOT chair David Kearns ’52) drew heavy traffic from admiring visitors.

“On to the red planet: Astronaut Jim Pawelczyk ’82 takes his audience on a trip to Mars, which he predicts could happen by 2014.”

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“Thank you to volunteers: Among events honoring volunteers was a Medical Center brunch party, here being enjoyed by Mark and Mary Frances Garber ’86 and family.

“The greatest contribution [of higher education in the past 150 years] is advanced instruction and research in science and engineering.”


“Progress for the human race than education.”

Sesquicentennial Convocation Co. Chairman George Fisher, Sesquicentennial Convocation
“This school is a national treasure, and is and should be a source of pride for our community.”

—Eastman Kodak Co.
Chairman George Fisher, Sesquicentennial Convocation

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“The lowdown on Hollywood: “In all the art forms, the most difficult achievement is to make a motion picture,” declares Jack Valenti, Motion Picture Association of America chief, chairing the “UR in Hollywood” panel.

World premiere: Donald Hunsberger conducts the Eastman Wind Ensemble in a work commissioned from Eastman alumnus Jeff Tyzik ’73 for performance at the Sesqui Convocation.

“Unveiling: A portrait of Robert B. Goergen ’60, chairman of the Board of Trustees, is displayed at the dedication of the Robert B. Goergen Athletic Center.

“You’ve got mail: Kodak chairman George Fisher cracks up the Convocation audience with purported advice from George Eastman via e-mail from above. Along with more general admonitions (cherish the University of Rochester), Eastman ordered his company successors to “keep the boxes yellow . . . Nobody messes with this.”

Rhees returns to Rochester: Rush Rhees’s daughter, Henrietta Rhees Stewart, and granddaughter, Henrietta Stewart Callaway, chat with President Jackson at the Gala Dinner.

The big bang: Friday night’s fireworks light up the Genesee.

A little light music: From American Sign Language to Women’s Studies, the College’s academic departments hosted open houses for returning alumni and visiting parents. These performers, Jon Prince and Fay Yao, are students in Department of Music.

Birthday cake: Robert B. Goergen ’60, chairman of the Board of Trustees; Joe Mack ’55, trustee and Sesqui chairman; and President Jackson were among those doing the honors when it came time to blow out the candles.

“It is this thought—of underlying continuity of purpose and focus—in particular, that gives me great faith about the future of the University of Rochester, and the opportunities that it faces as it builds on both common threads in higher education and on its own distinctive past and special attributes.”

—President Thomas Jackson, Sesquicentennial Convocation