

*Saint Vincent College Public Relations
News Release*

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Bill Isler Named Executive Director of The Fred M. Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media at Saint Vincent College

Center's Strategic Initiatives Underway

LATROBE, PA -- William H. Isler has been named Executive Director of The Fred M. Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media at Saint Vincent College.

As Executive Director, Mr. Isler will drive the Center's strategic initiatives, which will elevate thought leadership and awareness to address issues surrounding early childhood learning and the media. Given the complementary nature of his new role with the Fred Rogers Center, Mr. Isler will remain president of Family Communications, Inc., the non-profit founded in 1971 by Fred Rogers that creates programs and materials to strengthen the relationships between children, their families and the community.

Fred Rogers' widow and Honorary Chair of the Center's Advisory Council, Joanne Rogers said, "Bill understands the complementary yet independent roles that both Family Communications and the Rogers Center can contribute to advancing early childhood learning. He will be adept at fostering unique synergies as both organizations advance their distinct missions to preserve and build upon Fred's legacy." Mrs. Rogers also chairs the board of Family Communications, Inc.

Mr. Isler has more than three decades of experience in education, media, and organizational leadership. "Bill is a well-known champion of quality education and the right choice to lead the Rogers Center at this time in its development," said Milton Chen, chair of the Rogers Center Advisory Council and president of The George Lucas Educational Foundation. "His passion for education coupled with his 20-year working relationship with Fred Rogers will ensure that Fred's vision for the Center is fulfilled," he added. Fred Rogers guided the planning of the Center during a three-year period prior to his death in 2003.

"We are especially proud to welcome Bill back to Saint Vincent," commented James F. Will, vice chancellor and president of Saint Vincent College, noting that Mr. Isler graduated from Saint Vincent College in 1968 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English. Mr. Isler also serves on the Board of Directors for Saint Vincent College and on the Advisory Council for the Rogers Center.

Mr. Isler commented, "I'm pleased to be able to serve in a capacity that will be mutually beneficial for the Rogers Center, Saint Vincent College and Family Communications." While he has been serving on the Center's Advisory Council since its inception, Mr. Isler will begin to assume this new leadership responsibility in the near-term.

The Fred M. Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media at Saint Vincent College was established in September 2003 to serve as a national and international resource for addressing emerging issues affecting children and families. A 17-member national Advisory Council was established to advance the Center's mission. The Council also developed and endorsed an action plan, with three focus areas:

- Establishing and managing the main repository for the Fred Rogers archives;
- Serving as a broker for change by fostering leadership development and coalition-building through the creation of the Fred Rogers Leadership Institute;
- Conducting broad-based awareness of related early learning issues and ground-breaking work affecting children and families.

“Along with my colleagues at Family Communications who continue to produce programs and materials based on Fred’s philosophy, I am pleased that the Rogers Center will catalogue, preserve and make accessible materials that document the rich history of Fred Rogers’ work in children’s television, tracing from the beginning through the evolution of his unique approach. When fully developed, the Fred Rogers archive at the Rogers Center will be the only comprehensive collection of these works,” Isler said.

Archive Development Underway

Development of the archives has already begun and, to date, has focused on inventorying existing resources and determining preservation needs. Digitization will make the collection accessible online. In addition to access for researchers in early learning and children’s media, the Rogers Center’s online archives will facilitate access to materials and resources for children, parents, teachers and care givers. “The goal of the archives project is to articulate and represent Fred Rogers’ way of teaching and communicating so that future generations can continue to draw upon it,” added Isler.

Fred Rogers Leadership Institute Endorsed

At its planning meeting in Pittsburgh this week, the Rogers Center Advisory Council also endorsed establishment of the Fred Rogers Leadership Institute. It will have a dual purpose: first, to support current and emerging leaders in early learning and children’s media through a national Fellows program; and second, it will convene forums and collaborative efforts for advancing the fields of early learning and children’s media.

Architectural Design Competition to be Announced

Saint Vincent College is currently in the pre-design phase for construction of a facility for the Rogers Center on its campus in Latrobe (Westmoreland County). An architectural design competition for this facility will be announced this summer. The total estimated cost of this building project is \$12 million, including a multi-purpose conference center. Construction is expected to start in the Spring of 2006 with completion targeted for early 2008.

Members of the Rogers Center Advisory Council include Joanne Rogers, honorary chair; Milton Chen, executive director, The George Lucas Educational Foundation, chair; Doreen E. Boyce, president, The Buhl Foundation; Barbara T. Bowman, professor and co-founder, Erikson Institute; Nancy E. Curry, professor emeritus-University of Pittsburgh and director of child development; Everette E. Dennis, distinguished Felix E. Larkin Professor of Media and Entertainment Industries, Fordham University Graduate School of Business; Joseph F. Dominic, director of the Education Program, The Heinz Endowments; Ellen Galinsky, president, Families and Work Institute; David Hartman, television producer; William H. Isler, president, Family Communications, Inc.; Thomas C. Mans, vice president for academic affairs, Saint Vincent College; Archabbot Douglas R. Nowicki, O.S.B., chancellor, Saint Vincent College; James R. Okonak, executive director, McFeely-Rogers Foundation; Margaret M. Petruska, director of the Children, Youth and Families Program, The Heinz Endowments; James J. Ragan, director, master of professional writing program, University of Southern California; Robert C. Wilburn, president and CEO, Gettysburg National Battlefield Museum Foundation; and James F. Will, vice chancellor and president, Saint Vincent College.

For further information, you may visit the Rogers Center website at www.fredrogerscenter.org, send an email to info@fredrogerscenter.org or contact Saint Vincent College, 300 Fraser Purchase Road, Latrobe, PA 15650-2690.