

WIU President Guiyou Huang
Center for Performing Arts Groundbreaking Remarks – Oct. 7, 2022

Good morning! While every day is a great day to be a Leatherneck, today is an especially great day to be a Leatherneck! Gov. Pritzker and esteemed leaders, welcome to Western Illinois University!

Gov. Pritzker, Deputy Gov. Torres, CDB Director Underwood, CDB Regional Manager Cockrell, WIU trustees, and so many other government, local and University leaders, I extend to you our most sincere appreciation for your commitment to Western Illinois University and the west central Illinois region by getting the Center for Performing Arts off the ground (literally).

To say we are excited about this much-anticipated and iconic new center on our Macomb campus is an understatement. We are beyond excited, and we look forward to watching the building construction progress. We'll be counting down the days to our grand opening celebration, and we hope you'll return for that grand day!

Not only will this new Center for Performing Arts enhance Western's academic distinction; build upon our outstanding fine arts programs and performances; provide our region with state-of-the-art music, dance, and theatre facilities; and expand learning opportunities for our students, this is an investment in WIU's future and the future of west central Illinois. Through this project, hundreds of construction jobs will be created and once completed, the Center for Performing Arts at Western will serve as the cultural center for the region and drive economic development in McDonough County and west central Illinois.

I want to thank all of those who came before me, including President Emeritus Al Goldfarb, who spearheaded the initiative during his tenure, and all those who remain at Western and in our communities, who never faltered and never gave up on making this project a reality. The support and advocacy of many people made this day possible. It is happening!

Once again, we extend our gratitude to the Governor, our legislators, the CDB, WIU faculty and staff, businesses, alumni, friends, and donors for their dedication to this project, to Western Illinois University, and to the region. Now, it's my distinct pleasure to introduce an individual who doesn't really need introduction.