



Altgeld Bell Tower Rings in 2025 Without Its Famous Chimes

D G E F# E / D G E F#. If you've ever been on campus when those notes rang out across the Main Quad, you know the thrill of "Hail to the Orange" played on the Altgeld Chimes. Indeed, the bells have been a university staple since they were first played in October 1920. At the end of 2024, the chimes were silenced—thankfully temporarily—as part of renovation work at Altgeld Hall. The current stage of the project work, Phase II, is to restore the exterior of the hall, including improvements to the bell tower, with Capital Programs providing project management support.

The F&S team has played an instrumental role in the ongoing Altgeld work. Workers removed old, crumbling mortar and regouted the stone in the tower, using a custom mortar designed to match the original. They also created a one-foot-thick cement wall to shore up the structural support of the tower. Once this was completed, it was time to raise the roof. The terra cotta roof tiles were removed, and a huge crane lifted the square-pyramid roof frame off the tower in mid-December and lowered it gently to the ground (see inset photo below right).

Once the bell tower was opened up, it was time to remove the 15 bells, which together weigh 7.5 tons (15,000 pounds). The largest

"F&S is proud to play our part in the renovation work at Altgeld Hall, stabilizing the exterior enclosure and strengthening the chime tower, for its use by Illinois students in the coming ages."

~Kevin Price, project manager, Capital Programs

bell is 5 feet in diameter and weighs 3,000 pounds (about the same as a Honda Civic or a female hippopotamus). The smallest bell weighs 300 pounds (about the same as a French door refrigerator or a newborn elephant). Under the oversight of White's Clock and Carillon Northeast, Inc. (Pulaski, NY), each bell was carefully maneuvered around the bell's frame, the other bells, and the tower walls, and then lowered to a flatbed trailer.

The wooden structure that holds the bells was also removed and will be repaired as needed, and the cables used to attach

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Play the virtual Altgeld Chimes at
<https://las.illinois.edu/giving/altgeldillini/chimes>



Photo: Keith Sutterfield, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION | Martin Luther King in His Own Words

In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the F&S Diversity and Inclusion Committee hosted a Shared Experience, showing the video of an interview King gave to NBC News' Sander Vanocur in 1967, just 11 months prior to King's assassination in Memphis. Remarkable for both being in full color and for being astonishingly relevant in 2025, the 26-minute interview addressed a "New Phase of the Civil Rights Struggle."

Vanocur began by asking about the bus boycotts in Montgomery, Alabama, (December 1955) and King's thinking at the time about the civil rights movement. King responded, "Then the philosophy was we must go all out to use legal and nonviolent methods to gain full citizenship rights for the negro people of our country." He went on to explain that it "centered on breaking down all the barriers of legal segregation."

Vanocur posited that a nonviolent approach was the only thing the Black community could have chosen, "the White community having the monopoly on violence. If you had tried violence, they would have met it with violence. It was the only device open to you, wasn't it?" King pushed back on that argument: "I put it another way—that morally I was led to nonviolence because I felt that it was the best moral way to deal with the problem. We were seeking to establish a just society, and it was my feeling then, and it is my feeling now, that violence is certainly much more socially destructive, and it creates many more social problems than it solves, so I was led to nonviolence for deep moral reasons."

The interviewer then suggested that nonviolence was more useful in the South than it had been or would be in the North. King refuted that as well. "We didn't have many civil rights activities on a massive scale in the North until three or four years ago, so I would say that we just haven't had a chance to experiment on a broad scale with nonviolence in the [North]." He went on to note that in the South, there were "visible villains [like] Jim Clark [a racist sheriff known for brutal tactics], Bull Connor [a White supremacist and politician who ordered fire hoses and attack dogs be used against protesting students], cattle prods, police dogs, but in the North, you don't have those visible villains."

King did indicate that housing conditions and school quality for Black people in the "ghettos" were areas where inequities were visible, and he felt it was just a matter of time before people's attention was turned to these issues. King thought, however,



Photo: A image from the King interview

that it was easier to fight for a specific cause—integrate this lunch counter or that park—than to work toward eliminating slums generally or having truly equitable education. King suggested the civil rights movement had entered a "new phase," in which "we have moved from a struggle for decency, which characterized our struggle for 10 or 12 years, to a struggle for genuine equity, and this is where we are getting resistance because there was never any intention [on the part of White people] to go this far." King allowed that there were some in the White community who were

genuinely and absolutely committed to racial equality, but at that moment in time he thought "they are a very small minority."

When Lincoln freed the slaves, King explained, no land was given to them, no money to start a new life outside of slavery, despite the fact that the United States was giving away millions of acres of land to White immigrants at the same time. "It was freedom without food to eat or land to cultivate, and therefore it was freedom and famine at the same time." Pointing out that White people often suggested Black people should lift themselves by their own bootstraps, King remarked that this was a "cruel jest to say to a bootless man that he ought to lift himself" in this way when "negroes by the thousands and millions have been left bootless as a result of all of these years of oppression."

While King argued Black people just want what all people want—to be treated as human beings, not to be degraded, to be able to raise one's children in a better way, and so on—he also noted that

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~Martin Luther King Jr., 1967

integration did not mean giving up on African American culture. In fact, he said, "it seems to me that integration at its best is the opportunity to participate in the beauty of diversity."

To achieve these goals, however, meant addressing "three evils in our nation . . . not only racism, but economic exploitation of poverty . . . and militarism" together because we couldn't solve one without working on the others. While recognizing the country "still had a long, long way to go," he felt people would eventually adjust "once the nation makes it clear that in schools and housing, we've got to learn to live together as brothers."

The fact that King's talking points are still salient in 2025 really resonated with those in attendance. In the discussion portion after the video some frustration was expressed that we're still struggling with many of these same issues 58 years later. Although it was good to take honest stock, so we can see areas where we better need to focus, it would have been nice to have more solid progress. And that was indeed food for thought as we celebrate King's life and legacy. If you'd like to see the entire interview it full, you can watch it or read the transcript at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xsbt3a7K-8&t=42s>.



On January 27, 1956, King outlines strategies for the Montgomery Bus Boycott in Alabama. In the front row is Rosa Parks, a seamstress who sparked the yearlong boycott when she refused to give up her bus seat to a white man. Don Cravens/The LIFE Images Collection/Getty Images

SPOTLIGHT ON SAFETY

Wet Weather Walking

Slips, trips, and falls are always a concern in the workplace, but adding moisture from precipitation can increase the hazards because wet conditions decrease the normal friction between feet and the walking surface. As we move toward spring, consider the following safety tips, especially on rainy days:



- Wear comfortable, slip-resistant shoes.
- Be careful on wet sidewalks and around entryways.
- Use handrails when walking on stairs, which can be particularly hazardous when wet.
- Avoid looking at your cell phone when you're on the move. Instead, keep an eye on where you're planting your feet.
- Be especially careful on wet surfaces at night.
- Wipe your feet when entering a building.
- Store wet clothes and umbrellas away from walkways. Water could pool under them, creating a risk for passersby.
- Wipe up water on the floor if you can or report an unsafe wet area.
- If you're using equipment in wet areas, remember the water is slippery for things like ladders, too. Take extra care.

A Snowy January

Fans of snow were happy this January as Central Illinois had a multiday snow event early in the month. In the local area, Pana officially received the most, with 11.5 inches. In Champaign County, the further north you were, the more snow you saw. Champaign-Urbana, and thus campus, received 3 to 4 inches. Fortunately, the F&S team was on the job, and they moved swiftly to clear snow and ice from over 90 miles of sidewalk, 23 miles of roadway, and 147 parking lots, along with the entrances of more than 200 buildings! Additional snow and freezing temperatures contributed to the ongoing need to remove snow and ice from campus during the remainder of the month. Thankfully, February looks to have warmer daily high temperatures!



F&S, Fitness, Well-Being, and You

F&S continues to prioritize the health and well-being of team members in 2025. You may have already tried the Athletico pilot program, where industrial wellness specialists can help you with aches, pains, stiffness, and the like. Now, F&S is excited to announce another new initiative: a Wellness Walking Trail in the West Hallway.

There's no need to go to the walking track when you can get in your steps at F&S. Arrows will be placed on the floor to point out the routes. Five laps of the West Hallway (including the spur by the locksmiths) is the equivalent of walking one mile! If you want to shake up your path, you could choose to do your laps in the West Hallway and the Transportation Bay walkway for a total of 1.2 miles!



Signage will be added to explain the routes and offer fitness walking tips. These will be displayed on the wall at the start of the walking path at the south end of the West Hallway. Taking a turn on the walking trail has the added benefit of not being weather dependent. Try squeezing in at least one loop on your next break, or suggest a walking meeting the next time you need to confer with a colleague. These small actions can have a large impact. Let's all commit to be fit!

Active Threat Training



As part of F&S' ongoing commitment to safety engagement, team members in Transportation & Building Services recently completed the Civilian Active Threat Workshop. Here they're attending the classroom portion of the program.

(“Altgeld Bell Tower ...” continued from page 1)

the bells to the structure—and to play them—will be replaced. Fortunately, the bells themselves will not need restoration work because they are still in good shape, having received a tune-up as recently as 2017–18.

With the bells out of the way, the tower is next scheduled to get a new steel frame, inside the extant walls, for additional stability. Although the tower and roofing improvements continue, Phase II remains on track for completion in 2025. Once the work is finished, the bells, which are being stored on campus, will be returned and resume their exhortation to “Hail Alma Mater” once again. Learn more about the project at <https://fs.illinois.edu/illini-hall-replacement-and-altgeld-hall-renovation-project/>.

Big Breakfast Events Are Coming!

If you’ve been craving pancakes, you’re in luck! The F&S Big Breakfast and Big Breakfast for Dinner are just around the corner! Enjoy the traditional homestyle breakfast buffet in the PPSB West Hallway:

- **Big Breakfast**, Wednesday, February 26, 7 to 8:30 a.m.
- **Big Breakfast for Dinner**, Thursday, February 27, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Along with pancakes, you can sample biscuits and gravy, three varieties of sausage patties (pork, turkey, or vegan), scrambled eggs, breakfast potatoes, a yogurt bar, fruit, and more. Team members can “grab and go,” or a limited number of tables and chairs will be available.

Please RSVP by February 21 at <https://forms.illinois.edu/sec/1777156965>. If you have questions or you’d like to volunteer to help set up/clean up, cook, or serve at either session, please contact Doni Walker dewalke@illinois.edu, 217-333-0101.

The Big Breakfast is an approved F&S event. With prior supervisory approval, up to 0.3 hours can be charged. Please use work order {XX-9999} phase 065 to report the time.



Merit Mugs

Supervisors and forepersons, do you have a team member who goes above and beyond? One who exemplifies key F&S values like teamwork, safety, and perseverance? You can recognize their contributions by awarding them a Merit Mug! It’s easy to do; simply fill out the Merit Mug form on ERIN (<https://erin.fs.illinois.edu/Resources/forms>).

Deb Caparoon, accounts payable manager, recently nominated Brodny Uebele, accounting officer, for this award. She noted that after a retirement, Brodny stepped in to tenaciously follow up with a vendor to resolve years-old issues. She added, “He has been a great team player and is persistent and perseveres to see a task to completion.”



Mentoring Informational Lunches a Success

Two informational lunches were held at F&S at the end of January in support of the CU One-to-One Mentoring program. Participants were treated to a pizza lunch and heard from Champaign mentoring coordinator Lauren Smith about how the program works. Current mentors were also on hand to answer questions. Great stories were shared about the joys of mentoring.



If you’re interested in mentoring a local student, there is still time to sign up for the spring semester. Learn more at <https://www.cu1to1.org>. One deadline to keep in mind is that the final mentor training this semester is Wednesday, February 12, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., in the Mellon Building (703 S. New Street, Champaign). If you plan to attend and have not already signed up, please contact Lauren smithla@u4sd.org, 217-351-3722, so she can register you for the training and have enough folders for everyone in attendance. Lauren notes it is okay to fill out the application (available on the website) and bring it to the training or to fill it out at the training.

Remember that mentoring is an approved event and up to one hour a week may be charged.

Mark Your Calendar!



Daniel Gray-Kontar, Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center’s new associate director of Arts & Cultural Programming, has graciously agreed to be the guest speaker at the next Diversity & Inclusion Noontime Knowledge. Please make a note that to accommodate his schedule, this event will be held on Tuesday, February 25, at noon. To join, see the Zoom information in the E-Update and on posters and digital signs around PPSB. If you have questions, please contact Julie O’Mahoney jao22@illinois.edu, 217-244-0905.

Blood Drive Kudos

Many thanks to the 14 whole blood and the four double red cell donors who contributed to the F&S Blood Drive at the end of January. The local community relies on blood availability for cancer and trauma patients, people with chronic blood disorders, and more. Each donation may save three lives and offer families and friends the gift of more time with their loved one. Your gift of blood matters. If you would like to participate next time, please save Thursday, June 19, on your calendar.



Send your stories and photos to
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