

Urgent funding campaign underway to replace Fuller Dome HVAC system

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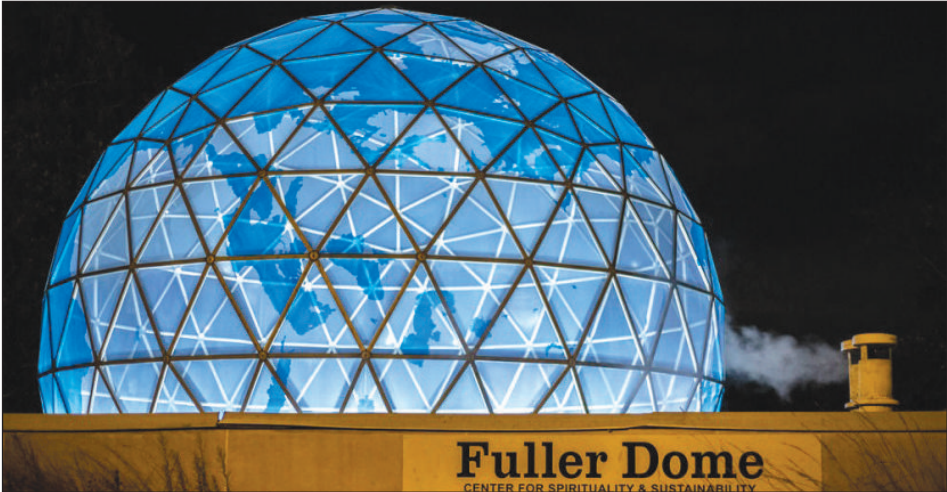
Organizer Benjamin Lowder recently issued an emergency alert – an urgent plea for support to replace the heating and air conditioning system at the Fuller Dome located on the main campus of Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE).

Lowder noted on the GoFundMe page he has organized for donating: “We have been informed that the Fuller Dome’s heating and air conditioning system will not make it through another season. The system has been breaking down lately and in recent years we have been applying temporary fixes to the dome’s antiquated fossil fuel-based system but now it must be completely replaced.

“This miniature earth dome is Buckminster Fuller’s masterwork and its preservation represents an opportunity for us to demonstrate our collective values in caring for our cultural heritage as well as the planet. We are taking this costly need for maintenance as an opportunity to pivot the dome’s energy source away from fossil fuels and towards electricity and ultimately renewable energy. This is the first phase of a major preservation and greening project that begins with this emergency need to stabilize the dome’s antiquated climate control system,” he shared further.

As of July 25, 2023, the GoFundMe campaign had raised close to \$10,500 of its \$27,000 goal.

“After stabilizing the climate control system with your help,” said Lowder in his urgent plea for help, “the next phases of this project will involve adding a green roof to the old flat roof that surrounds the dome, as well as adding an entry plaza for ADA accessibility and finally erecting a solar field over a parking lot to make the dome’s operation completely carbon neutral. This is a considerable expense and we need



An evening view of the Fuller Dome on the campus of SIUE, today known as the Center for Spirituality & Sustainability, an iconic architectural structure that is now in need of emergency repairs and is seeking urgent community support. (Photo courtesy of the Center for Spirituality & Sustainability)

your help to continue fulfilling the dome’s mission to promote humanity’s sacred connection to the earth and each other.”

The history behind the Fuller Dome at SIUE may not be familiar to everyone, however, but it is indeed impactful locally, regionally, and globally – for what it represents, its mission, and as a uniquely iconic educational study tool for past, present, and future artists, designers, engineers, architects and mathematicians.

Buckminster “Bucky” Fuller and his architectural partner Shoji Sadao completed construction on a landmark geodesic dome 52 years ago that they designed as a religious center for the then-newly founded SIUE campus.

The dome that Fuller and Sadao created was the realization of a vision that Fuller had for a building idea he called a “Geoscope.” Fuller’s “Geoscope” concept was to construct a spherical, translucent, miniature earth building that would allow occupants a unique architectural vantage

point to discover both their place in the world and the world’s place in the universe. This view would be achieved through the alignment of the longitudinal lines of the building’s miniature earth dome with those of the actual earth, Lowder shared further.

Fuller and his geodesic dome design concept was featured in an Architectural Digest story written by Hannah Martin and published in February 2016. In that article, Fuller’s dome portfolio was further reviewed as AD took a deeper look at what Martin termed Fuller as, “the serial inventor.”

Martin introduced her story by writing: “It would be incorrect to call Buckminster Fuller an architect. In fact, he was much more. But, of course, the American inventor, theorist, and author did create stunning architectural structures—even if many of them weren’t ultimately destined for living. His claim to fame is, no doubt, the geodesic dome, a spherical structure Fuller patented with an omnitriangulated surface that gave it superstrength.”

To review Martin’s entire story about Fuller and his Earth-inspired vision, visit online at <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/gallery/buckminster-fuller-architecture>.

The Fuller Dome at SIUE was dedicated in 1971, and today it is managed by the nonprofit organization, Center for Spirituality & Sustainability. It stands as the only built example in the world of Fuller’s “Geoscope” concept. Fuller had originally hoped to design and build “Geoscopes” all over the world, straddling key lines of longitude around the planet.

Since 1971, the Center has served the University and area communities as a place for multifaith and interfaith activity from its leased land. A variety of educational, cultural and social events are held there throughout each year. Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Baha’i, and Native American faith traditions hold devotions, celebrations and public programs at the Center. An annual “Celebration of World Faiths” also takes place here, highlighting various faith traditions and interfaith issues.

It is the Center’s vision and goal to preserve the historically significant and iconic Buckminster Fuller geodesic dome, as its translucent “miniature Earth” serves as a beacon to many for global unity. A connection of the world’s cultural and spiritual traditions continues to be sustained here through a common concern for the planet and its symbolic existence.

To learn more about the Fuller Dome and the Center for Spirituality & Sustainability, visit online at <https://www.fullerdome.org/> or call (618) 650-3246.

To respond to the emergency alert and make an online donation to help preserve this piece of local and global historical significance, visit the GoFundMe page, <https://gofund.me/4285a339>.

L&C to commemorate work of Ellison: *Civil rights, Vietnam* photographer killed in action

Lewis and Clark Community College will showcase the award-winning work of Photographer Robert J. Ellison – focusing on his coverage of the Civil Rights movement and Vietnam War – during a public photo exhibition and commemorative event in August.

Both the exhibit and event, co-sponsored by The Hayner Public Library District, are free and open to the public.

The photo exhibition, which will mimic a journey through time in 100 photographs captured by the young photographer, who was killed in action at age 23 when a plane he was on was hit by enemy gunfire in Vietnam in March 1968.

It will run from Aug. 14 through 31 in L&C’s Hatheway Gallery. Gallery hours are from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.

As the only surviving son of a soldier killed in World War II, Ellison, a graduate of Alton’s Western Military Academy and son of a Monticello College alumna, was exempt from military service in Vietnam. Nevertheless, he bravely served on the front lines as a civilian photographer for Newsweek and Time, bringing captive images from overseas to the American public.

The commemorative event will honor Ellison’s work and serve as a retrospective of his life and the places and events he captured, featuring a panel of guest speakers guided by emcee Art Holliday from KSDK, from 2 to 4 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 26, in the Hatheway Cultural Center’s Ann Whitney Olin Theatre, 5800 Godfrey Road, Godfrey, Ill. The exhibit will be open for extended hours that day, so visitors can stop in after the event.

Speakers will include Webster University History Professor John Chappell, who



Robert J. Ellison is seen shooting in the field in Vietnam, where he covered the war as a civilian photographer for Newsweek and Times magazines. (Photos courtesy of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum)

specializes in 20th century U.S. history, Western Military Academy graduate (and Ellison’s former classmate) Bill Kaune, Monticello College Alumna Linda Nevelin, and Judge Luther Simmons, a local expert on the history of civil rights.

“Ellison felt compelled to record the story of American soldiers honestly,” said Ralph “Bo” Jackson, whose dream has been to bring this exhibition to life in the Riverbend community.

Jackson said Ellison was one of 200,000 people who heard Martin Luther King, Jr. give his famous “I Have a Dream” speech in Washington, D.C., and was so moved that it spurred him to take an active role in the Civil Rights movement. His images follow several marches and other



Civil rights activists sleep at Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church, Selma, Alabama, March 1965. Brown Chapel was the starting point for the Selma to Montgomery March. (Photos courtesy of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum)

events throughout the 1960s, capturing the essence and energy of the times, and were published by Ebony magazine.

Civil rights activists sleep at Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church, Selma, Alabama, March 1965. Brown Chapel was the starting point for the Selma to Montgomery March.

In 1968, Ebony hailed him as “the young white photographer who lived free of prejudice, full of understanding and respectful of the rights of men.”

Ellison was born on July 6, 1944, in Ames, Iowa, the son of Albert Jackson “Jack” Ellison, a lieutenant in the 11th Airborne J Division, and his wife, Miriam Ellison (later Miriam Eaton).

His great-grandfather founded the Western Military Academy in Alton, Ill.,

where Robert Ellison would eventually attend high school. Nearly everyone of age, including two of his aunts, served in the military during World War II. In early 1945, 23-year-old Lieutenant Jack Ellison was killed at Luzon, Philippines. Robert, six months old at the time, never met his father.

To learn more, visit online at <https://www.lc.edu/community-visitors/campus-attractions/art-exhibitions/unfiltered-lens.html>.

Lewis and Clark Community College has been a military-friendly school for more than a decade, and strives to bring educational and engaging events to the Riverbend community through Key Direction 3 of its strategic plan. To learn more, visit <https://www.lc.edu/college-information/mission-vision-and-values/strategic-plan.html>.