

Golden Alumni Luncheon Remarks
May 12, 2006
Noon
Seelbach Hotel

Good afternoon. And welcome home. We are honored to have you back at the University of Louisville at this special time of year.

As I have said many times, U of L has a great -- a **great** -- history and tradition.

The Class of 1956 is a critical part of that history. You have helped build this great tradition. You helped lay the foundation for everything we are doing today.

Thank you.

In some ways, 1956 seems to be repeating itself 50 years later. For instance,

- In 1956, our library moved into a new building, Schneider Hall, which was hailed for its design and praised as an example of outstanding modern library architecture.
- Our main library now is the William F. Ekstrom Library, and we just celebrated a new \$14.2 million expansion of that facility that includes all the latest amenities, from a robotic storage and retrieval system to wireless internet access, a 24-hour study area and a coffee shop that serves up Starbucks coffee to our students.

Schneider Hall, by the way, now houses our fine arts program and the Hite Art Institute. Our fine arts program is the state's largest, and it's playing a key role in redevelopment of downtown Louisville.

- Also in 1956, Freedom Hall opened at the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center and became the home of Cardinal basketball. Today, there is much talk about a new arena, on the riverfront, that would replace Freedom Hall as home of the Cardinals.

Still, the university is much different than the school from which you graduated 50 years ago. I think you can be proud of the direction we're headed.

Once again this year, we enrolled our best freshman class ever based on ACT scores. Preliminary figures suggest we'll do even better this fall.

Once the students are on campus, we're giving them a better experience, and we're preparing them for bright futures. Our students are competing with the nation's best for Fulbright, Goldwater, Rotary and other top national and international scholarships.

Recently, the Goldwater Foundation announced that four Kentuckians had received these prestigious awards. One attended school out of state, another attended the University of Kentucky. **Two** of the winners are currently enrolled at the University of Louisville!

Our Honors Program, which provides extra support to our top students, has grown from under 300 students five years ago to more than 800 students today.

Our students are receiving an outstanding undergraduate experience.

For instance, Kentucky's poet laureate, Sena Naslund, is a member of our English faculty.

Researchers Scott Whittemore and Fred Roisen are developing treatments for spinal cord injuries that hold the promise of helping victims walk again.

Mariusz Rataczak in our James Graham Brown Cancer Center may have found a way to harvest and

replicate adult stem cells, a finding that could revolutionize a number of areas of medical research.

The Fine Arts program I mentioned earlier is moving many of its courses, students and works to the Cressman Center at 1st and Main streets this fall.

Our master of fine arts program also is expected to play a major role in Museum Plaza, the magnificent 61-story building being planned near the riverfront.

Our College of Business, under the outstanding leadership of Dean Charlie Moyer, is finalizing plans to move our graduate business programs to downtown. We may have a major announcement on that in the coming weeks.

Our Health Sciences Center is growing with the addition of several new, state of the art research buildings.

Our James Graham Brown Cancer Center is well on its way to achieving Comprehensive Cancer Center status, which will bring renowned faculty, enhanced federal funding and new trials and treatments to the commonwealth. The Cancer Center is expanding into new facilities to accommodate its growth into the top center in the region.

And later today we are going to announce the governor's support for a new economic development project at the old Haymarket site in downtown Louisville. (You may want to tell them a little about the project.)

All this growth was predicted and planned for in the Challenge for Excellence, a strategic business plan developed by the university in 1998 to help us grow into a premier metropolitan research university.

Just this week, I reviewed the Challenge with our Board of Trustees, who agreed that we have achieved our goals and then charged me with developing a new vision for the next 10 years.

As you can see, our goal is to build on the history and tradition you have been part of. By setting the bar high, you have set the standard by which our current and future students will continue to be judged.

You established the tradition of excellence. We promise to continue that tradition.

Thank you again and have a great weekend.