

“A New Era of Visual Health:
Dedicating the School of Optometry Eye Care Center”

School of Optometry Eye Care Center Dedication Ceremony

Remarks of Michael A. McRobbie

President

Indiana University

Whittenberger Auditorium

Indiana Memorial Union

IU Bloomington

Wednesday, October 8, 2008

4:30 p.m.

1. INTRODUCTION: ILLUMINATION AND EDUCATION

In 1822, Thomas Jefferson wrote, “I look to the diffusion of light and education as the resource[s] most to be relied on for [improving] the condition, promoting the virtue, and advancing the happiness of man.”¹

These two elements—illumination and education—are at the heart of our celebration today. As we dedicate the School of Optometry Eye Care Center, we are illuminated by the many achievements that have led IU School of Optometry faculty and students to national and international prominence. And we are aiming towards the bright future of opportunity and promise that this wonderful new facility affords.

¹ Jefferson, Thomas. Correspondence with C. C. Blatchly. 1822. < <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu>>. Accessed 4 Oct. 2008.

2. A CONSTELLATION OF RESOURCES ACROSS THE STATE

This clinic joins a wide array of clinical and medical services that Indiana University offers across this state. Just yesterday, we broke ground on the Eugene and Marilyn Glick Eye Institute in Indianapolis. This institute will provide IU researchers world-class laboratories as they search for treatments and cures for a wide range of eye diseases. It is quite remarkable that in two days, we have celebrated two new facilities dedicated to vision research and health.

IU demonstrates that same longstanding commitment to improving Hoosier lives across the entire state. To the east, you will find great collaboration between the nursing program at IU East in Richmond and Reid Hospital. To the southwest, you will see scholars seeking cures for metabolic disorders at the IU School of Medicine--Evansville. To the south, you will see strong partnerships between IU Southeast and hospitals in New Albany, Jeffersonville, and Louisville. And to the north, you will find researchers making great advances against cancer in South Bend.

We can see similar dedication to human health across the Bloomington campus. The award-winning Simon Hall houses a wide array of interdisciplinary scientists working to unlock the mysteries of the human body. Further across campus Multidisciplinary Science Building II, upon which we broke ground last fall, will be home to neuroscientists, bio- and geochemists, and environmental scientists. And a third multidisciplinary science building will further build on IU's great traditions in the life sciences. Together Indiana University researchers are working towards better lives for all Hoosiers.

3. INFUSED WITH THE SPIRIT OF COLLABORATION

All of these developments reflect the spirit of collaboration that infuses this project as well. Indeed, with state-of-the-art conferencing facilities, the Atwater Clinic will enable

the School of Optometry to strengthen both national and international education and research partnerships. With additional clinical space, the facility promises to enhance students' preparation for professional practice. And even as we dedicate this new clinic, we are eagerly anticipating the research space that this clinic opens up within the existing School of Optometry building.

All of these advances translate into excellence in education and research that will have a fundamental impact on Hoosier health. As I have said before, good vision saves lives.

4. A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

And here at Indiana University, we are wasting no time in achieving that goal. We broke ground on this project earlier this year and are in the final stages of construction. We aim to have the clinic fully operational this coming spring. No effort like this is possible without the—dare I say—visionary leadership of a key group of individuals.

Former Dean of the School of Optometry, Jerry Lowther dedicated countless hours and endless energy to this project. He is the latest in the School of Optometry's strong leadership that began so many years ago with the pioneering Henry Hofstetter, continued with the late Gordon Heath, who instituted dramatic curricular and clinical improvements; and included the late Jack Bennett, whose steady leadership preceded Dean Lowther's tenure. That leadership continues with Interim Dean Sarita Soni, who also serves as Vice Provost for Research and who helped establish and served as Co-Director of the Borish Center for Ophthalmic Research.

Dedicated leaders like these have been a hallmark of IU's School of Optometry since its founding.

5. CONCLUSION: SPECIAL WORDS OF GRATITUDE

Such leadership has led to this singular day.

On behalf of Indiana University, I would also like to extend my gratitude to the many alumni and friends who have contributed so much to the success of the School of Optometry. Your wise counsel and generosity have also led us to this wonderful occasion.

As we dedicate this building we are paying tribute to the vision and achievements of IU alumni, friends, and leaders that form the strong foundation and lasting legacy of the School of Optometry.

Together, we will continue to build upon that foundation. Together, we will strive to preserve knowledge and, to borrow from Jefferson, to diffuse light.

Today as the fires of achievement continue to burn brightly, we are reminded of Indiana University's motto: Lux et Veritas. Light and truth.

Thank you very much.