

“Possibilities and Progress Through Higher Education:
William G. Bowen, Anthony J. Adams, and Patricia R. Miller”

Spring Commencement Dinner

Remarks of Michael A. McRobbie

President

Indiana University

Indiana Memorial Union

Federal Room

Friday, May 6, 2011

6:30 p.m.

1. TOAST

I am delighted to welcome you all to this evening of celebration in honor of our distinguished guests, President Emeritus of Princeton University and of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation William G. Bowen, Dean Emeritus of the School of Optometry at the University of California-Berkeley Anthony J. Adams, and Co-founder of Vera Bradley Designs Patricia R. Miller.

We will have more formal introductions a little later in the evening.

Now would you please join me in raising your glasses to the remarkable and varied accomplishments of our distinguished guests?

Despite their very different backgrounds and experiences, each of our honorees demonstrates the extraordinary range of possibilities, positive change, and progress that can stem from a world-class education and commitment to making a difference in people's lives.

To our distinguished honorees!

Please enjoy your meal.

2. WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are pleased that several particularly distinguished guests could join us this evening.

Would you please help me welcome our trustees?

I am also delighted to introduce Bill Bowen's wife Mary Ellen and Pat Miller's husband Mike. Would you please help me greet them?

Would you also help me welcome IU honors graduate and one of this year's student commencement speakers, Andrew Merki?

3. INTRODUCING WILLIAM G. BOWEN

As a college student at Princeton back in the mid-1950s, Bill Bowen never imagined himself as a university president. As he told the *New York Times*, "I set out to be a teacher and a scholar."¹

Fortunately for everyone in American higher education, Bill has done more than he planned; he is a teacher, a scholar, and one of this country's finest university

¹ Crichton, Kyle. "Departing President: William G. Bowen; The Economist Who Taught Princeton Basic Economics." *New York Times* 10 May 1987.

administrators. Today, he is considered by many “the elder statesman of American higher education.”²

A native of Cincinnati, the first in his family to attend college, and a star squash player, Bill graduated from Denison University in Ohio in 1955. In 1958, he graduated from Princeton with a Ph.D. and joined the university’s economics faculty. By age 31, he was a full professor of public of economics and public affairs.³ In 1967, at just 34, he was appointed Provost at Princeton, and he skillfully managed issues as varied as the university’s transition to co-ed status and student hostility to the Vietnam War.

In 1972, he was named President, a position he occupied for the next fifteen years.

Notable during his tenure were his energy and his attention to detail. I understand that he was “directly involved in every major decision made during his tenure and [that he] stayed abreast of all issues confronting the University.”⁴ He also oversaw and helped achieve Princeton’s tripling of its endowment to \$2.1 billion.

In 1988, Bill was named president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, a position he held until 2006. During Dr. Bowen’s tenure as president of the Mellon Foundation, he started a now internationally acclaimed initiative in open source software—that is software for university purposes developed by consortia of universities themselves. The first such system, Sakai, known at IU as OnCourse, is now used by hundreds of universities in nearly a hundred different countries. It was developed with Mellon Foundation funds by a consortium consisting of Indiana University, the University of Michigan, Stanford, and MIT. Many other systems have followed.

It is not hyperbole when I say that Dr. Bowen’s vision in this area has transformed higher education and has collectively saved universities tens of millions of dollars.

² Heyboer, Kelly. “William Bowen Q&A: Former Princeton University President Reflects on ‘Lessons Learned’.” *The Star-Ledger* 13 Mar. 2011.

³ Ryan, Alan. “The Prince of Princeton.” *New Statesman* 14 Feb. 2011. P. 48.

⁴ “William Gordon Bowen: The Presidents of Princeton.” Princeton University Website. <<http://www.princeton.edu/pub/presidents/bowen/>>

He has written or co-written more than twenty books that analyze some of the most pressing issues we have faced in higher education over the last few decades. His 1966 work on the economics of university performing arts programs is still considered a classic. His book *The Shape of the River: Long-Term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions*, co-authored with former Harvard President Derek Bok, won the prestigious Grawemeyer Award. In 2009, he co-authored *Crossing the Finish Line: Completing College at America's Public Universities*, a groundbreaking analysis of college completion rates. Last year, he published the book *Reflections of a University President*, written at the insistence of many of his friends and drawing on the lessons he learned at Princeton.

He co-chairs the Research Alliance for New York City Schools and has served on the Board of Trustees at Denison University. He also is a member of the prestigious American Philosophical Society and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Last year, he received the 2010 Clark Kerr Award from the University of California-Berkeley for distinguished leadership in higher education.

And he shows no signs of slowing down. He has been described as a man of “prodigious energy,” by the *New York Times*, which added, “He does not walk so much as leap from place to place, and he is known to throw himself into his work.”⁵

Bill’s willingness to tackle any and all subjects concerning higher education—along with his energy, ideas, and lessons of leadership—make him a most deserving recipient of an honorary degree from Indiana University. And we are extremely grateful for his thoughtful and insightful words during this afternoon’s graduate commencement ceremony.

I am pleased to introduce President Emeritus of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation William G. Bowen.

⁵ Op cit.

Bill, would you like to say a few words?

4. INTRODUCING ANTHONY J. ADAMS

During the early years of his career, our next honored guest worked as a travelling optometrist serving remote Australian towns during the early 1960s. It was in one of those towns that Anthony Adams received a telegram that would alter the course of his life.

The telegram was from pioneering IU Optometry Dean Henry Hofstetter, and it contained an invitation for Adams to go to Indiana University to do graduate work.⁶ Adams accepted IU's offer—a \$1,600-a-year student assistantship—a year after graduating from the University of Melbourne in Australia with a bachelor of applied science degree with honors and a license from the affiliated Victorian College of Optometry.

He left for IU in the summer of 1963, traveling for five weeks by boat via Hong Kong, the Philippines, Japan, Hawaii, Vancouver, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.⁷

At IU, Tony specialized in neurophysiological research techniques, and in 1967 he participated in an international vision science symposium hosted by Indiana University.

Unfortunately for IU, Tony was recruited away by UC Berkeley where he began his career in 1968. He completed his doctoral degree at IU in 1970.

⁶ "Chapter 37. Dean Anthony J. Adams." University of California – Berkeley School of Optometry Website. <http://optometry.berkeley.edu/pdf/history_pdfs/berkopthist_sample07_adams.pdf>.

⁷ Bailey, Ian. "Anthony J. Adams Profile." *Clinical and Experimental Optometry* 85.5 (Sept. 2002): 315-9. Page 316.

Since 1968, he has been on the optometry and vision science faculty at UC-Berkeley, where he has also served as Director of the Graduate Ph.D. Training Program in Physiological Optics, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs, and, from 1992 to 2001, Dean of the school.

Even with his administrative responsibilities, he has maintained an active career as a researcher, studying, among other areas, the early vision changes of diabetics, drug effects on vision, and myopia development in children. His work has resulted in more than 165 articles in refereed journals and nine book chapters. And he has been a board member for several prominent optometry journals.

He has served as a member of the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Optometry, including as President from 1998 to 2000. He has also served as Vice President of the American Optometric Foundation Board, on the Board of Prevent Blindness America, and on the boards of the National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research and as Vice President on the Smith Kettlewell Eye Research Institute Board. He has also served on the National Academy of Sciences Committee on Vision, the Committee on Vision of the National Research Council, and the National Advisory Eye Council.

In 1998, he was elected Distinguished Practitioner in the National Academies of Practice in Optometry. In 2003, he received the Prentice Medal, the highest award given by the American Academy of Optometry. He has also received the Academy's inaugural Glenn A. Fry Award, the Garland W. Clay Award, and the Eminent Service Award. In 2004, he was elected to the National Optometry Hall of Fame and named Educator of the Year by the California Optometric Association.

He has also been awarded honorary doctoral degrees from the State University of New York and the Pennsylvania College of Optometry.

Upon stepping down as Dean of the UC Berkeley School of Optometry, Tony's colleague Ian Bailey captured the depth of his contributions to his profession when he wrote, "Anthony Adams is an Australian optometrist who became one of the most influential and respected leaders of academic optometry in the United States ...

The profession of optometry has changed a lot since this boy from Box Hill High School began his optometry course in Melbourne, Australia. The development of the modern optometric profession and its new directions owe much to the contributions of Tony Adams."⁸ Indeed, from the remote towns of Australia to Bloomington to Berkeley, he has cemented his legacy.

Tonight we are pleased to honor a distinguished graduate of Indiana University, adding to Tony's long list of honors and awards an honorary doctoral degree.

Would you please help me welcome former Dean of the School of Optometry at the University of California-Berkeley and IU optometry alumnus Anthony J. Adams.

Tony, would you like to say a few words?

5. INTRODUCING PATRICIA R. MILLER

In 2008, on a trip to Korea, my wife, Laurie, was given a lovely quilted purse by one of our alumni friends. We travelled to Korea the following year for the IU International Conference and Reunion, and Laurie returned the kindness, giving our friend a Vera Bradley bag. It was, I must say, like sharing a beautiful piece of Indiana.

I am sure you can guess why our final distinguished guest reminds me of this story.

⁸ Op cit.

Patricia R. Miller, co-founder of Vera Bradley Designs and former Indiana Secretary of Commerce, is one of Indiana's most remarkable, home-grown success stories.

After a childhood working behind the counter of her family's grocery store, Pat attended Indiana University Bloomington, where she studied business and physical education. At IU, she began two lifelong relationships: one with her future husband, Mike, and, we are pleased to say, one with her alma mater.

After graduation, she and Mike moved to Fort Wayne.

In 1974, the first patterns of her future success began to emerge when she and her neighbor, Barbara Baekgaard, started a wallpaper hanging business. I understand that after a number of years both grew tired of washing wallpaper paste out of their hair and looked for another business idea.

All of you have probably heard the legendary story of how Vera Bradley Designs was started, but let me share a few highlights. It was inspired when Pat and Barb visited Barb's mother in Palm Beach and saw a line of products—including handbags—in a local boutique that both thought they could make uniquely Indiana.

Their company, named in honor of Barb's mother Vera Bradley, would transform domestic fabrics into high-quality, fashionable cloth handbags and accessories.

Within five years, the company had moved from Barbara's basement into a 15,500-square-foot facility in Fort Wayne. Today, Vera Bradley Designs of Fort Wayne, Indiana, has net revenues of more than \$300 million a year and products including handbags, travel bags, and accessories sold in more than 3,300 specialty stores and more than 40 company stores.⁹

Pat's story—if it ended there—would be impressive enough.

⁹ <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/news/page/normal/17950.html>

Thankfully, for our state and for Indiana University, there is more.

In 2005, at the request of Governor Mitch Daniels, Pat took a leave of absence from Vera Bradley to serve as Indiana's first Secretary of Commerce and chief executive officer of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation.

Over the years, she has received numerous honors. In 1997, she was named both Indiana Business Leader of the Year and Indiana Chamber of Commerce Business Leader of the Year. In 2003, she received the Indiana University Distinguished Alumni Service Award, IU's highest alumni award, and in 2008, she received the Indiana Historical Society Indiana Living Legend Award.

She is currently a director on the IU Foundation Board, the IU Varsity Club, the Vera Bradley Corporate Board, and the Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer, a prominent supporter of research at the Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center at the IU School of Medicine.

Since its inception, the Vera Bradley Foundation has raised more than \$10 million and pledged an additional \$10 million endowment to a team of IU researchers and clinicians. The Vera Bradley Chair in Oncology was established in 1998 as a result of a five-year \$1.2 million endowment to the IU School of Medicine.

Pat's efforts through her foundation reflect a longstanding commitment to making positive change—and she continues to work to avoid what she calls “gelification”—a word she came up with to describe the effects of becoming too set in one's ways. As she has said, “We need to stay liquid, especially in today's rapidly changing world.”¹⁰

¹⁰ Maurer, Michael S. *19 Stars of Indiana: Exceptional Hoosier Women*. Bloomington: IU P, 2008. Page 214.

Pat's inspiring story and life's work reflect the best of Indiana University and the success we wish upon all of our graduates.

We are delighted that Pat is here with us this evening and will be delivering commencement remarks at our undergraduate ceremonies tomorrow. We are certain that our graduates will be inspired by her just as all of us are.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce Co-founder of Vera Bradley Designs and former Indiana Secretary of Commerce Patricia R. Miller.

Pat, would you like to say a few words?

6. CONCLUSION

Thank you all for coming this evening, and I look forward to seeing you at tomorrow's commencement ceremony.