

1235 words/ 8.5 minutes

“Walking into the World of the Future in Northwest Indiana”

IU Northwest Arts & Sciences Building Dedication

Remarks of Michael A. McRobbie

President, Indiana University

Arts & Sciences Building Auditorium

IU Northwest

Gary, IN

Friday, August 25, 2017

4:00 p.m.

1. THE THOUGHTFUL CREATION OF OUR COMMUNAL ENVIRONMENT

Renowned architect Frances Halsband, who has designed buildings for a number of American universities, writes:

“University campuses are places that speak to us of continuing care, thoughtful decision-making, reverence for tradition and ritual, and a harmony of nature, landscape, and architectural design. They are places that invite us to participate in the thoughtful creation of our communal environment.”¹

Today, we dedicate a splendid new facility that embodies all of these ideals—one that exemplifies mindful decision-making, continuing care, and the thoughtful creation of a communal environment—the splendid new IU Northwest Arts & Sciences Building.

¹ Frances Halsband, “Campuses in Place,” *Places Journal*, 17, 2005.

2. THE REGIONAL CAMPUSES: AN INTEGRAL PART OF IU'S MISSION

This building—and, more broadly, the IU Northwest campus—reflect the fact that Indiana University has served—and continues to serve—as the people's university. As a public university committed to the well-being of all the people of Indiana, IU has, for nearly two centuries, been educating Hoosiers—and students from across the nation—at the highest level of quality. Over the course of the 20th century, IU's educational reach expanded to every part of the state, through prospering medical education centers and vibrant regional campuses like IU Northwest.

Today, IU's regional campuses are invaluable community resources that serve a broad spectrum of students, and they are increasingly a first choice for some of the best and brightest high school students in Indiana.

Over the past several years, our trustees have taken a number of steps to strengthen the role our regional campuses play in their regions. For example, we have added degree programs at the IU regional campuses across the state focusing on the needs of the regions that they serve, and we have strengthened the academic quality of other programs.

The members of IU's regional campus communities should take great pride in all that these campuses provide to our students and their communities. Likewise, the successes of members of the regional campus communities are a great source of pride for all of us at Indiana University.

Nowhere is this impact more greatly felt than here in Gary and northwest Indiana.

Nearly three-quarters of IU Northwest graduates stay in the area, using their new skills and knowledge to contribute—along with current students, faculty, and staff—in countless ways, large and small, to the civic, economic, and cultural life of this region and the state.

3. TAMARACK HALL

As most of you know very well, the IU Northwest community faced an extremely difficult situation a number of years ago, when the campus sustained extensive flood damage in the fall of 2008. I flew up immediately to ensure the university was doing all it could to help the campus. Classes were cancelled for two weeks, and the administration, faculty, and staff worked tirelessly over the course of several weeks to restore normal operations. All involved deserve the highest praise for their efforts.

A thorough assessment revealed that Tamarack Hall—the campus’s oldest building—had suffered such extensive flood damage that it would have to be closed, and ultimately, it had to be demolished.

At almost the very same time as the devastating flood, the worst global recession since the 1930s began. As a consequence of the Great Recession, unemployment rose, stock market prices fell, and many universities—as well as state and local governments—faced widening budget deficits.

Although IU had made the replacement of Tamarack Hall a priority in our capital appropriation requests, plans for a new building at IU Northwest—as well as plans for a separate new facility for Ivy Tech in Lake County—had to be put on hold.

By 2012, a plan had been proposed for the facility we celebrate today. The then-newly proposed building would be shared by IU Northwest and the Lake County campuses of Ivy Tech in a special arrangement intended to encourage Ivy Tech students to finish their bachelor’s degrees here at IU Northwest.

Of course, IU and Ivy Tech Community College share a long and rich history of collaboration dating back many years. In recent years, we have worked together to

make it easier for students to transfer credits between our campuses and have established formal articulation agreements across the state to help Ivy Tech graduates earn a four-year degree from Indiana University.

The Arts & Sciences Building strengthens that long and successful record of cooperation and extends it well into the future.

4. A NEW HOME FOR THE ARTS

Architect Frances Halsband, whom I quoted a moment ago, also writes that university campuses are “spaces whose rhythms are defined by the campus calendar, but which are fully open to the outside world.” She continues: “Embedded in urban settings, their greens may be, in some sense, public parks; (and) their libraries, theaters, and athletic facilities invite (visitors)...”²

Of course, with the demolition of Tamarack Hall, the IU Northwest campus also lost the theatre that had been one of its most important attractions. But today, as we dedicate this new building, we also celebrate this wonderful new state-of-the-art theatre, as well as the building’s smaller studio theatre. Indiana University has long been deeply committed to the arts. They are a core part of our heritage. They are a vital part of a well-rounded education. I am very pleased that this building is now the new home for IU Northwest’s fine and performing arts programs, and that these programs are housed right alongside instruction in the sciences and other disciplines in this splendid new facility.

The performances in this new building’s theatres will attract campus, local, and regional audiences—and all of us very much look forward to this evening’s concert by the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra. The theatres—and this building more

² Ibid.

broadly—also have enormous potential as an anchor for the proposed University Park mixed-use development project at 35th Avenue and Broadway.

5. SPECIAL THANKS

Today's dedication of this long-awaited and much-needed facility is testimony to the dedication of many groups and individuals.

We are especially grateful for the support that the Indiana General Assembly has given us over the years. I want to express, on behalf of Indiana University, our deepest thanks to our state legislators—particularly the Lake County delegation—and the members of the State Budget Committee and the Commission for Higher Education for their loyal support of Indiana University and their effective support for higher education.

I also want to thank and commend our colleagues at Ivy Tech Community College, including Ivy Tech President Sue Ellspermann, and the Chancellor of Ivy Tech Lake County, Louie Gonzalez, both of whom are here today and will who speak in a few moments. All of us at Indiana University look forward to continuing to work together closely with them and their colleagues around the state to expand and strengthen the partnership between our institutions.

I also want, in particular, to commend former chancellor Bruce Bergland, who so ably and inspirationally led the campus's efforts to recover from the devastating 2008 flood, and current chancellor, Bill Lowe, who has been a tireless advocate for this new facility. IU Northwest has benefitted enormously from the excellent leadership of both Chancellor Emeritus Bergland and Chancellor Lowe.

And, finally and more generally, I would like to thank our Trustees for their steadfast and enthusiastic support—not only for this building—but also for their continued and ongoing efforts to guard and care for the welfare of our institution.

6. CONCLUSION

In the same essay I quoted earlier, architect Frances Halsband also writes that when we walk through the gates of a university campus, “we walk into the world of our future.”³

Today, and in the years to come, the students who walk through the doors of this building will walk into the worlds of their futures.

All of us look forward to witnessing the many ways in which the programs housed in the Arts & Sciences Building, the courses that are taught here, and the faculty who teach them will help to shape those futures.

Thank you very much.

³ Ibid.