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Excellence Academy Dedication  
Remarks of Michael A. McRobbie  
President, Indiana University  
South End Zone  
Memorial Stadium  
Friday, September 7, 2018  
2:00 p.m.

## 1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF “FIRST-RATE STUDENT ATHLETES AND FIRST-RATE PEOPLE”

Late in his tenure as Indiana University’s 10th president, William Lowe Bryan, who lettered in baseball at IU and was the only IU president to have also been an IU varsity athlete, wrote that the goal of IU Athletics should be to create “first-rate athletes as well as first-rate (people).”<sup>1</sup>

Today, as we dedicate the latest enhancement to the IU Athletics campus, we celebrate the completion of a building project that not only provides a splendid new home for the IU Excellence Academy, a program that is very much in the spirit expressed by William Lowe Bryan nearly a century ago—but a project that also represents the completion of a long-envisioned enclosure of Indiana Memorial Stadium, whose construction began in 1958.

The IU Excellence Academy reflects Indiana University’s deep and longstanding commitment to a comprehensive approach to the personal development of its student-athletes—an approach that equips student-athletes for success in competition, success in college, and for successful lives and careers.

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas D. Clark *Indiana University Midwest Pioneer*, Volume 3: Years of Fulfillment, (IU Press, 1977), 316. Original quote read “first-rate men.”

## 2. THE HALLMARKS OF INDIANA UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

Intercollegiate athletics contributes enormously to the character of university campuses and plays a major role in building and sustaining campus spirit. The accomplishments of Indiana University's teams provide a sense of excitement and pride for the extended university community, and those accomplishments continue to bind alumni and friends to IU. No matter where I go around the world, IU alumni and friends are eager to hear about the most recent accomplishments of our various teams.

In the last year alone, these accomplishments include (just to name a few):

- a school-record 90 All-American awards,
- 4 Big Ten Athlete of the Year awards,
- 42 individual conference championships (up from 27 the previous year),
- 37 First Team All-Big Ten honors,
- the WNIT Tournament Championship in Women's Basketball,
- a second consecutive Big Ten Championship for men's swimming and diving,

and

- a record 19th trip to the NCAA's College Cup for the men's soccer team, and its 16th National Championship game appearance.

As proud as we are of the success our student-athletes have had in competition, we are equally proud of their record-setting successes in the classroom.

Last year, 256 IU student-athletes were named to the Academic All-Conference team—a record for IU in a single academic year.

And IU had 65 students who earned GPAs of 3.7 or higher and were named Big Ten Distinguished Scholars for 2017-2018. That is the second highest total in IU history, exceeded only by the 68 honorees for the previous academic year.

All of these numbers confirm yet again the quality of our students and the dedication of the staff of IU Athletics, who stand behind the success of our student-athletes.

In addition to the excellent education IU student-athletes learn, through their participation in intercollegiate athletics, they also learn self-discipline, perseverance in the face of adversity, grace in dealing with disappointment, and a commitment to not only working together, but also leading together. These are the hallmarks of Indiana University athletics—and, indeed, of the liberal arts education that is at the heart of Indiana University.

The three Indiana University coaching legends whom we have honored today, Hobie Billingsley, Lin Loring, and Jerry Yeagley, embody these values. They represent the very best of Indiana University—and during their successful coaching careers, they helped countless student-athletes learn to embody the Hoosier values of hard work, dignity, and respect for others.

The IU Excellence Academy will help to produce the next generations of great Hoosier student-athletes who will reflect these ideals—and it will, perhaps, inspire some students to follow in the footsteps of coaches Billingsley, Loring, and Yeagley, and become coaches and mentors who inspire the student-athletes of tomorrow.

### 3. THE IU EXCELLENCE ACADEMY / SPECIAL THANKS

The IU Excellence Academy integrates all of the resources of the IU Athletics Department—in addition to the cutting-edge resources of a number of IU's schools—to ensure that IU student-athletes achieve their academic, athletic, and personal development goals.

Here, our outstanding student-athletes develop leadership and life skills, and receive academic support, career support, and sports performance assessment and support.

Like so many of IU's newest and newly renovated athletic facilities, the Excellence Academy has been made possible through the enormous generosity of Indiana University alumni and friends.

Last year, we announced a major gift that resulted in the establishment in the Excellence Academy of the Lawrence D. Rink Center for Sports Medicine and Technology. It is named in honor of Dr. Larry Rink, who is here today with members of his family. Dr. Rink practices cardiology and sports medicine in Bloomington, and is the longtime team physician for the IU men's basketball program. Please join me in welcoming Dr. Rink and his family.

The donor whose gift made the Rink Center possible wished, at first, to remain anonymous, but she has since agreed to allow the university to acknowledge her generous gift—and I am speaking of IU alumna, member of the IU Foundation Board of Directors, and one of Indiana University's greatest benefactors, Gayle Cook.

Gayle and her late husband, Bill, of course, also generously supported the construction of Cook Hall, IU's basketball practice facility, which we dedicated in 2010. Would you join me in expressing our thanks to Gayle, who is with us today?

The magnificent new entryway plaza of the Excellence Academy, is, as I mentioned, named Miller Plaza in recognition of a gift from alumni Patricia and Mike Miller. Pat, of course, is the co-founder of Vera Bradley as well as the Vera Bradley Foundation, which has been a generous supporter of breast cancer research at the IU Simon Cancer Center. Pat is also an honorary member of the IU Foundation Board of Directors, a longtime member of the IU Varsity Club—and I had the privilege of presenting her with an honorary IU doctorate in May at the IUPUI Commencement ceremony. Please join me in thanking Pat and Mike for their generous donation.

As I mentioned earlier, the Tobias Nutrition Center is the new state-of-the-art nutrition facility and dining space in the Excellence Academy. It was made possible through a generous gift to IU Athletics from Ambassador Randy Tobias, the former chair of the IU Board of Trustees, and his wife Deborah. As I said, we will hear from Ambassador Tobias in a moment, but would you join me now in expressing our thanks to Randy and Deborah.

A number of other alumni and friends have also made generous philanthropic gifts that have helped make the centers and spaces that comprise the Excellence Academy possible.

Among them are:

- Shelly Schwarz, whose gift established the Joe and Shelly Schwarz President's Suite in honor of her late husband, Joe,
  - Aasif and Tasia Bade, whose gift established the Bade Family Career Counseling Center,
  - Dena Rae Hancock and Rob Caito, whose gift established the Hancock Hiltunen Caito Center for Leadership and Life Skills,
  - Edson Sample, whose gift established the Sample Terrace at the top level of the Excellence Academy. Edson worked at IU in the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid for many years, and in 1987, generously funded the construction of IU's Sample Gates, which are dedicated to his parents,
  - IU alumna Kalen Jackson and other members of the Irsay family, the owners of the Indianapolis Colts, whose gift established the Irsay Family Wellness Center,
- and
- Frank and Linda Hancock, whose gift made possible the Frank and Linda Hancock Activity Room in the Excellence Academy.

I believe all of these generous friends of IU Athletics are with us today. I ask all of them to stand for our recognition, and would all of you join me in expressing our thanks to them?

Finally, I also want to thank Athletics Director Fred Glass and his wife, Barbara, for their generous gift that has established the Glass Family Student-Athlete Leadership Suite in the Excellence Academy—and to commend Fred for his visionary leadership of IU Athletics. Would you join me in expressing our thanks to Fred and his family?

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The achievements of IU's student athletes are just one aspect of the traditions of excellence that mark Indiana University as a national leader.

The project we celebrate today not only greatly enhances Indiana Memorial Stadium and provides a splendid new front door for all of IU Athletics, it also reflects Indiana University's deeply-held commitment to fostering the intellectual, emotional, social, and physical development of the university's outstanding student-athletes.

All of us look forward to witnessing all that they will accomplish—on and off the field—in the decades to come.