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IU Auditorium 75th Anniversary Gala

Remarks of Michael A. McRobbie

President, Indiana University

IU Auditorium

Saturday, April 9, 2016

7:00 p.m.

Thank very much you, Doug.

I want to begin by welcoming a member of the IU Board of Trustees who is with us this evening. Would you please join me in welcoming the vice chair of the Trustees, MaryEllen Bishop and her husband, Michael?

We are also joined this evening by two former trustees: Sue Talbot and her husband, Bob; and P. A. Mack and his guest, Joan Olcott. Would you join me in welcoming them?

And thanks to all of you for joining us for this celebration of a major milestone in the life of one of the treasures of the Bloomington campus.

IU's longstanding tradition of excellence in the arts and humanities is based first and foremost on the eminence of our outstanding scholars and performers. From the study of languages and literature, to the fine and performing arts, IU's faculty have established the university's programs as among the finest in the world. But IU's reputation for excellence in the arts and humanities is also based, in part, on its superb facilities—iconic buildings like the IU Auditorium where members of the IU community and the general public have unparalleled opportunities to engage with the arts.

Since its opening 75 years ago, the Auditorium has been a hub of cultural vibrancy and a major part of Indiana University's glorious tradition in the arts.

IU's legendary 11th president, Herman B Wells, envisioned the Auditorium as a magnificent centerpiece of the campus's fine arts district and as a facility that would strengthen and honor IU's commitment to the arts and humanities.

The Auditorium was the first campus building designed by the renowned New York architectural firm Eggers & Higgins. The firm served as IU's primary architects for more than three decades, designing many other facilities including the Lilly Library, the Fine Arts Building, and Assembly Hall.

Over the years, the Auditorium has hosted a multitude of brilliant lectures and superb artistic performances that have reflected the cultural tastes of members of our community and enriched their lives immeasurably.

In 1942, the Auditorium was the site of New York's Metropolitan Opera Company's first performance on a university campus and its first in a city as small as Bloomington. The Met returned often, performing 15 operas here during the Auditorium's first decade.

The Auditorium has also allowed millions of visitors to enjoy and explore the historical and cultural significance of Thomas Hart Benton's timeless murals depicting the "Social and Industrial History of Indiana."

The Auditorium has also been a gathering place for members of the university community during important moments in our history. We celebrated with Elinor Ostrom as she reprised her Nobel Prize lecture here. IU basketball national championships have been celebrated on the Auditorium's steps. And incidentally, Laurie and I had our wedding reception in the lobby. More somber observances have also been held here, including commemorations of the first and 10th anniversaries of 9-11.

As a venue for students in the performing arts, the Auditorium has also played an important role in augmenting our facilities for training in the arts. It has also helped to

foster many meaningful academic partnerships between world-class artists and our students.

Thousands of students have gained valuable experience in customer service and venue management by volunteering as Auditorium ushers and working as student managers. In fact, Auditorium Director Doug Booher and a number of distinguished guests who are here this evening are alumni of the Auditorium's student usher corps.

Now, would you please join me in raising your glasses to the IU Auditorium staff and volunteers past and present, to members of the "Circle of Friends" who have generously supported the Auditorium's mission, and to all who have helped sustain the tradition of excellence that has become a hallmark of the Indiana University Auditorium over the past 75 years.

Cheers.

And now, please join me in welcoming to the podium the Provost of Indiana University Bloomington and Executive Vice President of Indiana University, Lauren Robel.