

“Creating Opportunity for Columbus and Beyond”

Dedication of the Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence

Remarks of Michael A. McRobbie

President

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Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence

4444 Kelly Street

Columbus, Indiana

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10:00 a.m.

1. “ARCHITECTURE AS FROZEN MUSIC”

As part of the 1967 dedication events for the Lincoln Elementary School, designed by Gunnar Birkets, Lady Bird Johnson remarked, “It is said that architecture is frozen music, but seldom in history has such a group of devoted artists produced such a symphony in stone as presents itself to the eye in Columbus, Indiana.”¹

Today, we gather to dedicate the new Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence that is another superb addition to the magnificent pantheon of architectural masterpieces in this city. The first lady’s words remind us of this city’s remarkable history and help us imagine its future.

¹ Quoted in Patricia Schultz’s *1,000 Places to See in the USA and Canada Before You Die*. New York: Workman, 2007. Page 504.

2. COLUMBUS' RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE

Mrs. Johnson's remarks about architecture as frozen music were uttered just over two centuries before, first by the philosopher Friedrich von Schelling and later by Goethe.² Her words, then, have a fitting history that reflects the rich cultural heritage of the city of Columbus. Its architecture ranks among the finest in the nation, with buildings designed by some of the world's greatest architects: I.M. Pei, Eliel and Eero Saarinen, Richard Meier, Kevin Roche, and—we are honored to say—Cesar Pelli. It features an impressive collection of public art by masters like Henry Moore and Dale Chihuly and masterpieces of landscape design by Dan Kiley at the Miller House and others.

All of this came about because the people of Columbus care deeply about their city. Those people include J. Irwin Miller and his family, including his son Will, who, we are delighted, is with us here today. Their prescience and philanthropic spirit helped transform this city into the cultural and architectural treasure that it is today, but the Millers were not alone. It took an entire city, renowned architects, artists, and designers from around the world, to create the jewel that Columbus has become.

3. A HISTORY OF PARTNERSHIP

I am proud to say that Indiana University has had a long and productive presence in Columbus, a presence that has, as its foundation, this city's great belief in the power of education. That presence includes the new IU center focused on art and design here in Columbus, which we announced last winter, made possible through the generosity of the citizens of Columbus. We greatly look forward to the center's opening this fall with programs that draw upon the great strengths and unique assets of this wonderful city. Over the years the Indiana University-Purdue University Columbus campus has also fostered the spirit of collaboration and partnership that brings us here today.

² See Friedrich von Schelling's *Philosophie der Kunst* (1802-3) and Johann Peter Eckermann's *Conversations of Goethe with Johann Peter Eckermann* (1836).

4. A SPIRIT OF COLLABORATION

The Columbus Learning Center, dedicated in 2005, expanded this collaboration even further as the community, through the Community Education Coalition (CEC), brought that building to life for IU, Ivy Tech, and Purdue University. The Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence represents the next generation of collaboration here. It joins the great people of Columbus, civic organizations like the CEC, with private industry, this state's great public institutions of higher education, and a number of the state's most generous foundations. The center was funded by a portion of the Lilly Endowment's extremely generous \$38 million grant to the CEC and the Heritage Fund, the Community Foundation of Bartholomew County, which aim to improve education in southeast Indiana. The Cummins Foundation generously provided a grant to cover design architect fees. We are deeply grateful for this very generous support of higher education in Indiana.

The spirit of collaboration and commitment out of which this center has grown will continue to fuel its success with a close alignment between educational opportunities and regional economic needs.

One of the best examples of this collaboration may be IUPUC's new mechanical engineering degree program. Announced in April, this new program extends IUPUI's engineering program and represents another example of the great partnership between Indiana University and Purdue in the interest of regional educational and economic development needs. This new center, which will offer mechanical engineering courses among a wide range of other offerings, was an important catalyst for the development of that new degree program, which meets the growing needs of area companies including Cummins.

According to a recent Bureau of Labor Statistics Report, the Columbus, Indiana metropolitan service area has the highest concentration of mechanical engineers in the

country on a per capita basis (over 21 mechanical engineers per 1,000 workers).³ This degree, then, fits this community, and we look forward to the many engineering professionals integrating their extensive experience and creative problem solving into the courses they teach in this new program.

This strong tie between the new AMCE and the community is reflected in the ties within the center itself with faculty and students from IU, Ivy Tech, and Purdue. Such proximity creates a synergy leading to stronger partnerships and new ideas that serve changing regional needs.

5. CONCLUSION: OPPORTUNITY FOR COLUMBUS AND BEYOND

Earlier in my remarks, I mentioned architecture as “frozen music.” Here, in these early days of June, it seems that nothing in Columbus, Indiana, is frozen. In fact, at any time of the year, it is hard to imagine that this city ever stops, so vital is the life of the community.

The Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence is further demonstration of that vitality. While its architecture may be compared to frozen music, we look forward to the center warming with life and providing opportunity for the people of Columbus and beyond.

³ “Occupational Employment Statistics: Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2008: 17-2141 Mechanical Engineers.” Bureau of Labor Statistics Website.
<<http://www.bls.gov/oes/2008/may/oes172141.htm#st.>> Accessed 7 June 2011.