

“Engagement, Collaboration, and Innovation for the Future
of Columbus, South Central Indiana, and Beyond”

Columbus Economic Development Board Annual Meeting

Remarks of Michael A. McRobbie

President, Indiana University

The Commons

Columbus, IN

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11:30 a.m.

1. WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you, Rick (Johnson), for that kind introduction.

Rick and his family are longtime supporters of Indiana University, as was his late father, Dick, who was widely admired and respected for all he did for Columbus. Rick serves on the IU Foundation Board of Directors, as did Dick, and is an alumnus of IU’s Kelley School of Business, where he has served on a number of advisory boards. We are extremely grateful for his service to IU.

I want to extend a special welcome to Columbus mayor, Jim Lienhoop, who is also an IU alumnus. Mayor Lienhoop is here with his wife, Pam who is an IU alumna, and members of his staff.

I also want to recognize a number of IU senior leaders who are here this afternoon. Many of you may already know Vice Chancellor and Dean Reinhold Hill, who began his duties as the chief executive of Indiana University-Purdue University-Columbus just last month. I also want to thank the members of the IUPUC faculty and staff who are here today for all they do to further the cause of quality education in Columbus.

Also with us today are IU's Vice President for Capital Planning and Facilities Tom Morrison; Vice President for Engagement Bill Stephan; the Founding Dean of IU's new School of Art and Design, Peg Faimon; and the director of the IU Center for Art and Design in Columbus, Kelly Wilson.

There are of course, many IU graduates in attendance today as well, including business and community leaders who all make enormous contributions to Columbus and the Bartholomew County area, and I would like to welcome all of them as well.

I also want to congratulate the Columbus Economic Development Board on its 40th anniversary. This is an impressive milestone and is a great tribute to the work that the members of this organization have done over the last 4 decades. It also reflects the value that the community you serve derives from your work and the positive and important impact you continue to have. Given this milestone you are celebrating this year, I am particularly honored to be invited to speak to you today.

2. HOME OF ARCHITECTURAL MASTERPIECES, A LABORATORY FOR ART AND DESIGN

I am delighted to be back in Columbus, a city where, for you, architectural masterpieces are part of the fabric of everyday life—but a city whose architecture has been nationally and internationally acclaimed and which has been ranked the sixth most architecturally significant city in the United States by the American Institute of Architects.

It is, when you think about it, quite incredible that here, in the rural heartland of Indiana, is a city that is regarded architecturally as being in the same class as Chicago, New York, Boston, San Francisco, and Washington D.C. Rightly has Columbus been called the “Athens of the Prairie.”

Some of you may know that my wife Laurie and I love architecture, and we have greatly enjoyed opportunities to explore and learn more about the city's treasures. The city documents the full sweep of modern architecture and its greatest exponents—from the stark modernism of Robert Venturi's Fire Station #4 to the spire of Eero Saarinen's magnificent North Christian Church, to the challenging First Christian Church designed by Saarinen's father, Eliel, and to the Mabel McDowell School, designed by John Carl Warnecke.

These buildings demonstrate that architecture truly is one of humanity's great arts. It stands alongside painting, music, poetry, and literature as one of humankind's greatest accomplishments.

It is, as Goethe called it, "frozen music."¹

To Frank Lloyd Wright, "a great architect is—necessarily—a great poet. He must be a great original interpreter of his time, his day, his age."²

I have admired great modernist architecture all over the United States and around the world in such architecturally dynamic cities as Berlin, Shanghai, and Tokyo. But though the scale may be different, the architecture here in Columbus is no less impressive than in these places. All of this is, of course, originally due to the vision, genius, and courage of one man—former Cummins Chairman and CEO J. Irwin Miller, and to the enduring and continuing generosity of the Cummins company through the Cummins Foundation, which Miller founded.

It was the Cummins Foundation that paid the architectural fees for world-class architects for so many of the great buildings of Columbus, having given \$25 million for

¹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of His Life*, Volume 4, Translated by Margaret Fuller, (Hilliard, Gray, and Company, 1839), 282.

² Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Future of Architecture*, (New American Library, 1970) 262.

this purpose since 1954. The magnificent architecture here reflects then, the tremendous impact that deep generosity and prescience can have on a city.

I believe it reflects the fundamental insight that Miller had that great architecture can have a salutary and uplifting effect on the lives of citizens. It gives them a sense of transcendent beauty and harmony that is uplifting and inspiring.

As so often is the case, Churchill put it best in a famous quote: “We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us.”³

Miller’s appreciation for the truth of this insight extended to his own life, as he and his family lived much of their life in Saarinen’s (not to mention Kiley and Girard’s) sublime Miller House—regarded as one of the most influential examples of modern residential architecture in the world. Indiana University has long recognized and appreciated the richness and greatness of the architectural heritage of Columbus. We have also long believed that it provides an unmatched opportunity for Indiana University to expand its activities in art and design to intimately involve the city of Columbus.

This led to the establishment of the IU Center for Art and Design, under the leadership of Professor Kelly Wilson. The center, which we dedicated in 2011, was made possible through the generosity of the citizens of Columbus. In fact, the center was established at the invitation of—and with the strong urging of—the people of Columbus. I well remember a meeting I had with Dick Johnson in 2009, not long before his death, where we first reached the agreement for IU to establish this initiative. This was, perhaps, one of his last great services to Columbus.

The center grew out of a partnership between IU and the Community Education Coalition of Columbus, led by the tireless John Burnett. It has, for the last 5 years,

³ Winston Spencer Churchill, October 28, 1943 address “Rebuilding the House of Commons,” reprinted in *Never give in!: the best of Winston Churchill's speeches*, (Hyperion, 2003), 358.

specialized in teaching design studies, drawing upon the great strengths and assets of this wonderful city. Integrated, as it is, in the heart of the city, the center allows IU students to work in the superb “living laboratory” of art and design that is Columbus.

The center is part of IU Bloomington’s new School of Art and Design. Central to the mission of the school is a deep understanding and appreciation of the fact that design is now of fundamental importance to just about every area of business and industry. It is also based on the premise that, as with the media industry, which has been transformed by information technology, so too is design being transformed by information technology with the digital convergence of every form of design from architecture to fashion through extraordinary innovations like 3D printing.

Designers in the 21st century work in an environment where theories, technologies, and methods of delivery and consumption are constantly changing. In this environment, designers must be able to give form to concept using an exceptionally wide range of disparate elements, all of which is made possible by digital technologies. There is no better example of this point than Apple, the world most valuable company. Apple has great technology. But it also has superlative design. In fact, it is said that if Apple’s legendary Chief Design Officer, Jony Ive, were to resign or retire, Apple’s stock price would fall 10 percent. Incidentally, an understanding of these same forces in the media industry is what led to the establishment of IU’s highly successful new Media School.

The School of Art and Design was formed then, to provide a state-of-the-art education in these fields to students who would be seeking careers in this radically new world. And the center here in Columbus provides students in the school with an extraordinary opportunity to learn about design in a broader context—a context that includes environmental, interior, industrial, graphic, landscape, and fashion design. The center also adds a vibrant element to downtown Columbus through its design gallery, exhibitions, and continuing education opportunities for people in the community.

The center has enjoyed great success during its first 5 years. It has already received 8 grants totaling nearly \$100,000 which are indicative of its potential to attract much greater funding in the future. These grants have helped foster collaboration between IU and Columbus in the areas of art and design. The center has hosted 22 gallery exhibitions, including exhibits of nationally acclaimed artists and designers. It has hosted 4 conferences, including a conference on “Drawing and the Brain” earlier this year. And it has engaged in a wide variety of community outreach projects—teaching design to Columbus elementary school children, helping Cummins engineers learn to think more creatively, and sponsoring a number of cultural events in the city.

The center’s director, Kelly Wilson, and all associated with the center deserve our heartiest congratulations on making it such a success.

3. THE FUTURE OF ARCHITECTURE EDUCATION IN SOUTHERN INDIANA

Given this success and the establishment of the School of Art and Design, given the remarkable opportunities and resources provided by the city of Columbus, given the workforce needs of Cummins and other Columbus area companies, given the opportunities and educational needs provided by the digital revolution in design, the Columbus Education Coalition wrote to Indiana University last year and asked us to consider “the creation and implementation of a master’s degree program in architecture and design” to involve Columbus through the Center of Art and Design. This seemed an excellent time and opportunity to do this, especially given the very strong support Columbus had given the Center. So, after assessing our capabilities in this area, we responded by rapidly developing a proposal for a master of architecture degree that was approved by the IU Board of Trustees in June this year.

The proposal was submitted soon after to the Indiana Commission for Higher Education for approval, and we hope it will be possible for them to consider it for approval soon.

The need for professional architects and designers nationally is considerable, and not just here in Columbus. Here in Indiana, according to the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, the employment of architects is projected to grow by more than 20 percent through 2022—a rate of growth that is considerably higher than the national average.

Another measure of the need is the low number of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects, who are chosen in a highly selective process as some of the most able and creative members of their profession. In Indiana, there are fewer than 20 active Fellows. In Illinois, there are over 150.

The addition of a master's program in architecture will also contribute enormously to IU's efforts to create and sustain a culture of "building and making" on the Bloomington campus. We see the development of such a culture as being essential and transformative for Indiana University, enabling us to maximize IU's potential for developing its inventions and innovations for the economic benefit of the people of Indiana. Today, all research universities are expected to support a culture of "building and making" that takes these innovations and inventions in their labs and disseminates them through new companies, products, and services that contribute to state and national economic development and generate jobs and income for the university. Two disciplines that are essential to creating and sustaining such a culture at research universities are design and engineering.

Toward that end, we also recently established a new program in intelligent systems engineering at IU Bloomington and we are grateful to the Indiana Commission for Higher Education who, with great foresight, approved the degrees for this program a year ago. In fact, that program begins this fall and the first students in the program are taking their first classes today. It is fitting that they will graduate in IU's Bicentennial year.

Columbus, as you know, has the highest concentration of mechanical engineers in the nation, and three times the national average of all types of engineers. The new engineering program in Bloomington will greatly benefit the region and the state of Indiana by producing new, well-trained graduates in a high-demand field. It complements the degree program in mechanical engineering that is offered at IUPUC. The establishment of the Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence at IUPUC, which offers mechanical engineering courses, among a wide range of other offerings, was an important catalyst for the development of that degree program, which meets the growing needs of area companies, including Cummins. The building that houses the center, of course, was designed by another famous architect, Cesar Pelli, who I had the honor of meeting at the building's dedication in 2011. Incidentally, Mr. Pelli has designed one of the new buildings on the IU Bloomington campus, Luddy Hall, which will house IU's new engineering program, as well as other programs, when it is completed next year.

4. FOUR FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS

The city of Columbus has four important features that will be critical to the success of IU's master's program in architecture.

First, as I have already noted, is that it is widely recognized as one of the world's greatest centers for modern architecture. Students in the program will have direct access to these exemplary buildings—and to the Columbus Architectural Archives, with its wonderful collection of original architect's drawings and architectural models—as invaluable resources for the study of modern design.

A number of IU programs already bring students to Columbus to take advantage of these resources, but the trips are of short duration. Architecture students would benefit enormously from long-term exposure to the high concentration of superb examples of modern architecture that exists here in Columbus. As Thomas Jefferson wrote—

how are skills in architecture to be highly developed “unless we avail ourselves of every occasion... of presenting models for study and imitation?”⁴

The second feature of Columbus that would be critical to this program’s success is the city’s reputation as a successful center of fabrication and manufacturing.

Of course, one major reason for the city’s well-deserved reputation in this sector is the presence of the worldwide headquarters of Cummins Incorporated, a company that continues to see great global success. Moreover, while many other regions of the state are experiencing economic challenges due to enormous changes in this arena as a result of globalization and technological change, Columbus has seen investments in new equipment and facilities of about \$100 million in the last year alone from companies like Faurecia, Toyota, and the Impact Forge Group.

Access to digital fabrication technologies leads to a more meaningful design process and thus complements design education. IU’s master’s program in architecture would seek to collaborate and build relationships with area leaders in fabrication and technology.

The third attribute of Columbus that will help make the program succeed is its size.

Columbus is large enough to have all the institutions, aspirations—and conflicts—of a large city, but it is small enough and open enough that students and faculty will be able to learn—in a relative short time—about not only urban form, but also about governmental processes and the processes that lead to solutions to problems. It can take years—even decades—to begin to understand these processes in a major urban area. Thus, Columbus is what is sometimes known as a “scalable city.” What our students and faculty learn here can be applied to larger cities.

And the fourth aspect of Columbus that will be instrumental in this program’s success

⁴ Thomas Jefferson, Letter to James Madison, September 20, 1785.

is the city's remarkable commitment to coalition building. The city's successful approach to building coalitions and fostering collaboration originated, in large part, through the life and work of J. Irwin Miller—and it continues today through the work of his successors and the Institute for Coalition Building, which has a well-deserved national reputation for building communities to solve problems and challenges that sit at the intersection of the public, private, and social sectors.

Understanding the coalition process as it has worked in Columbus will greatly enhance the ability of architects to understand a community and its problems and needs—thus, the study of the coalition process will be an important part of the professional practice courses in IU's master's program in architecture.

I look forward to being able to report to you soon that the Indiana Commission for Higher Education has considered and approved this new program. All of us at IU believe, as you have heard today, that the program will have enormous benefits for Columbus—a city that has long had a great belief in the power of education, for Indiana University, and for the entire state.

The establishment of this master's degree program then, would also honor the matchless legacy of J. Irwin Miller, one of the greatest business and cultural leaders America has ever produced, as well as those of all his distinguished and dedicated successors. Frank Gehry could have been writing about Miller when he wrote "Architecture should speak of time and place, but yearn for timelessness."⁵

Miller inspired many colleagues and successors—many of whom are in this room today—to carry on, and indeed enhance, the grand tradition he began.

5. PARTNERSHIPS THAT BENEFIT IU, THE REGION, AND THE STATE

⁵ Frank Gehry, as quoted in Kin Johnson Gross, Jeff Stone, Julie V. Iovine, *Home*, (A. A. Knopf, 1993), 43.

As Indiana's flagship public university, Indiana University also makes enormous contributions to the economic development and vitality of our state in many other areas.

IU was recently ranked by Reuters as one of the Top 50 innovative universities in the world.

Our research is responsible for major scientific breakthroughs, as well as new inventions, private investment, and new high-wage jobs.

Just over a week ago, I was delighted to announce that Indiana University had received nearly \$1 billion in external funding for research and in private philanthropy in fiscal year 2016—an increase of over 14 percent from the previous year.

This remarkable figure underscores the fact that Indiana University truly is the state's research powerhouse.

Many of IU's great research breakthroughs and educational initiatives would not be possible without private support.

Some of you may also know that IU is in the midst of the university-wide For All Bicentennial Campaign, which has the ambitious goal of raising \$2.5 billion by 2020. I am delighted to report that we are already well over halfway to our goal, having so far raised more than \$1.6 billion through the support of nearly 238,000 donors, which includes many people in this room, and for your generosity, Indiana University is deeply and most sincerely grateful.

We have also seen incredible growth in tech transfer activities with hundreds of patent applications, invention disclosures, and intellectual property licenses. In fact, last year, IU was granted 53 U.S. patents—an IU record—and completed 43 licensing agreements—an increase of 72 percent over last year. These impressive numbers demonstrate the degree to which IU innovations are valued by industry.

All of this demonstrates that Indiana University, through its ongoing commitment to excellence in education, research, and engagement, is making an extraordinary contribution to a prosperous and innovative Indiana.

6. CHANGE AND GROWTH AT IU

Over the last few years, IU has been engaged in ongoing efforts to reevaluate how we achieve the university's core missions. At the same time, we have been planning for IU's Bicentennial in 2020, which gives us the unique opportunity to launch an extensive range of initiatives that will culminate in 2020 so that, in that year, we can rightly look back on the previous decade as one of the most productive and most transformative in IU's history.

Over the last nine years, widespread changes have been taking place on all IU campuses and at our medical centers across the state that will have sustained and long-lasting effects on the future of the university and the future of the entire state.

These changes include the creation or restructuring of eight new schools, which represents the most academic change at IU since the early 1900s, when most of our professional schools were established.

While the academic disciplines at IU affected by these changes are far-reaching and extensive—from public health to philanthropy, from media related fields to computer and information sciences, from design and engineering to international studies—and soon we hope to include architecture—the impetus behind each of these major changes has been the same: to provide our students with the most relevant educational opportunities possible so that they are positioned for success in today's global marketplace upon their graduation.

7. CONCLUSION

Greater engagement and collaboration between IU and the people of Columbus and Bartholomew County is possible because we share a common vision for the future of our state and its communities.

We want to ensure that a first-rate education that is affordable and accessible is available to Indiana's best students and that it allows them to realize their greatest hopes and aspirations.

For our communities, we share a vision of more jobs with better pay, enhanced educational and cultural opportunities, and a wider range of career opportunities.

We aspire to healthier and happier Hoosiers, who have access to the best health care, medical education, and research.

We understand that progress only comes through partnerships with individuals, community organizations, and industries.

We experience the realities of living in a global economy, and we are prepared to meet the challenges of this changing world through hard work, teamwork, and innovation.

Most importantly, we share a commitment to excellence in everything we do—from education and research to economic development, the health and life sciences, and the arts.

Excellence is the key to a stronger, brighter future for Indiana and for all of us who call it home.

Thank you very much, and I will see you all again soon, on October 6-7, when the IU Board of Trustees hold their first ever meeting in Columbus.