

Groundbreaking for Evansville Multi-Institutional
Health Science Education and Research Campus

Remarks of Michael A. McRobbie

President, Indiana University

500 Walnut Street

Evansville, IN

Tent at planned site of the new facility

Friday, October 23, 2015

10:00 a.m.

1. INTRODUCTION

Thank you, Mayor Winnecke.

More than 75 years ago, at the dedication of an IU School of Medicine facility, Indiana University's 11th president Herman B Wells observed that those present were not merely dedicating a building, they were also dedicating themselves to the work ahead which the building would make possible.

“The unsung heroes whose courage over the operating table, whose skilled care of the ailing, and whose careful research in the laboratory will advance the health and knowledge of humanity,” Wells said, “will by their actions afford the state and nation ample proof of the high trust in which these facilities have been reposed.”¹

Today, we also dedicate ourselves to the work ahead—not only to the construction of the splendid new facility for which we break ground, but also to continued excellence in health sciences education and research that will have an enormous impact on the citizens of Evansville, the region, and the state for many years to come.

¹ Herman B Wells, Remarks at the Dedication of the Clinical Building. Indiana University Medical Center. Indianapolis, Indiana. Delivered May 14, 1938. Indiana University Archives.

2. AN HISTORIC FOUNDATION

Education, research, and health have been intimately connected for well over a century in the state of Indiana through the IU School of Medicine. Established in 1903, the IU School of Medicine now has more than 20,000 living graduates, and has grown to include nine medical education centers across the state, including the strong program here in Evansville. The history of the IU School of Medicine in Evansville dates back to 1971, when the University of Evansville campus was the school's first home. Then, beginning in 1972, the school had a presence for more than 20 years on the campuses of both the University of Evansville and the University of Southern Indiana.

A number of years ago, the IU School of Medicine assembled an expert task force to study the looming shortage of healthcare providers and make recommendations. Their 2006 report concluded that the school would need to increase its enrollment of medical students by 30 percent to ensure an adequate supply of Indiana doctors in the coming two decades.²

One of the ways the school has worked to accomplish this increase has been to transform the regional medical education programs from 2-year to 4-year programs, as has been done here in Evansville.

I am very pleased to note that more than 75 percent of the current second-year class in the School of Medicine-Evansville will remain in the program full- or part-time for their third year, and more than half of the class will undertake their third year of training right here in Evansville.

We are joined today by many of our students in the Indiana University School of Medicine-Evansville. They, along with their colleagues from our partner institutions, are,

²<http://www.medicine.indiana.edu/news_releases_viewRelease.php4?art=605&print=true>

in the words of Herman Wells, the “unsung heroes” of this project, whose actions will provide ample proof of the worth of the facility for which we break ground today.

I ask all of the students in the IU School of Medicine-Evansville to stand for our recognition.

3. VITAL PARTNERSHIPS

The process of planning for this expanded multi-institutional medical education and research campus in Evansville has truly been a broad-based partnership, just as the work ahead will be.

Let me express, on behalf of Indiana University, our gratitude to our partner institutions.

Dr. Linda Bennett of the University of Southern Indiana, Dr. Thomas Kazee of the University of Evansville, and the other senior leaders of their institutions had the vision to recognize the needs of the Evansville region and to work collaboratively with the IU School of Medicine, with each institution drawing upon its particular strengths, to create a framework for the innovative teaching and research in the health sciences that will take place in this new facility.

And let me once again thank President Bennett and the University of Southern Indiana for fostering the longstanding partnership that exists today between the IU School of Medicine and USI. The new multi-institutional partnership has its roots in the success, over many years, of our partnership with USI, and indeed, were it not for that partnership, the occasion we celebrate today would not have been possible.

Input from members of the business community, health care providers, and representatives from our partners at Deaconess Health, St. Mary’s Health, Memorial Hospital and Health Care Center in Jasper, and Good Samaritan Hospital in Vincennes

has been—and will continue to be—crucial to the development of what truly will be a distinctive life and health sciences resource for southwest Indiana.

As you know, Ivy Tech has also been one of our consistent partners in this effort. While Ivy Tech is not included in this initial phase, we do look forward to a time when they will be able to become a full partner in a future expansion. We are planning for that day in our site development process.

Many of you here have been instrumental in helping develop the vision for the new medical education center over the past four years. I am grateful for the work of the a number of different local working groups who have helped guide the site selection; funding; academic, research, and communications priorities; and guided our success.

The Evansville Regional Business Committee, a group who has provided IU with sound advice and counsel on previous occasions, recognized the potential of the new center and provided key funding for the important feasibility studies.

We are also deeply grateful to the City of Evansville for financial incentives that will help make the new health sciences campus possible. This combined \$35 million support package represents the largest amount of local government financial support for one project in the history of Indiana University. We very much appreciate the confidence of the Evansville community in this project as expressed through these incentives.

It is our hope that this project will also play an important role in the continued economic development of Evansville's downtown, and we look forward to playing a role in the ongoing redevelopment and revitalization of the riverfront.

We are especially grateful for the support that the Indiana General Assembly has given to Indiana University over many years, including, of course, their appropriation of \$19.2 million for the facility we celebrate today.

I would also like to recognize IU Vice President for Capital Planning and Facilities, Tom Morrison, whose dedicated efforts have helped us reach this day.

And I would be remiss if I did not express thanks to Pat Shoulders, from whom we will hear in a few moments. Pat is the longest serving of the current members of the Indiana University Board of Trustees, and, as most of you know, he has been one of the leading advocates for this project. As you will have seen, there have been numerous major new initiatives at IU recently, and Pat has been one of the strongest supporters of these.

4. CONCLUSION

Maryjoan Ladden, a senior program officer with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, recently wrote: “we need to embrace new ways of delivering health care in this country, and that change begins with how we educate those who provide health care.”

The facility and the partnership we celebrate today will help to do just that, as it brings together the expertise of the IU School of Medicine, the IU School of Dentistry, the nursing and occupational therapy programs of the University of Southern Indiana, and the health science programs of the University of Evansville.

All of us look forward to the ways this new facility will dramatically increase medicine- and health-related educational opportunities for students in southwestern Indiana and northwestern Kentucky, and the enormous impact it will have on the region for many years to come.