"Shared Dreams and Aspirations:
The Installation of William Lowe as Chancellor of IU Northwest"

Indiana University-Northwest Chancellor Installation Ceremony

Remarks of Michael A. McRobbie
President
Indiana University
Savannah Recreation Center
IU Northwest
Friday, October 29, 2010
3:30 p.m.

1. INTRODUCTION: EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

On February 3, 1964, a delegation of civic leaders from Gary, Indiana, held a series of meetings with leaders of Indiana University. In one of the first meetings of the day, Vice President of the Gary Chamber of Commerce William Allman said:

"Gentlemen of the University, we have travelled the 200 cold miles today to impress upon you the urgent desire and dream of the people living in the far Northwest corner of

Indiana. That desire and dream is to have your Northwest Campus offer degrees in as many colleges as practical now and in the years ahead." [1]

As we celebrate the installation of Bill Lowe as chancellor of the Northwest campus of Indiana University, it is important to remember the desire and dream of which Mr. Allman spoke so many years ago. In doing so, we also recognize and reaffirm the close ties that have always existed between this campus and the broader community.

2. THE POWER OF EDUCATION IN GARY

Much has changed here in Gary over the years, but the citizens of this notable city have always believed in the power of education. We need only remember the progressive educational ideas that Superintendent of Schools William Wirt brought to Gary in the early twentieth century for evidence of that belief. Mr. Wirt believed in educating the whole student through work, study, and play. These ideas may seem common today, but at the time, they were truly revolutionary.

Under the superintendent's guidance, the Gary school system became a model for the nation and included the Froebel School, one of the first schools in Gary to be integrated; the Emerson School, with its special auditorium period; and the great Roosevelt High School, the first and only school built for African Americans in midtown Gary.

We need only look at the graduates of Gary schools to gauge how successful the schools have been in nurturing many different talents. For instance, the first American to win the Nobel Prize in Economics Paul Samuelson went to school in Gary as did Joseph Stieglitz, winner of that same prize in 1970. Astronaut Frank Borman, Oscar winner Karl Malden, actor Avery Brooks, and the entire Jackson family were educated in

[1] Allman, William. "Gary, Indiana Presentation to Indiana University." Dated 31 Jan. 1964. Delivered 3 Feb. 1964. Indiana University Archives.

Gary. And a host of professional athletes, including NFL, NBA, and Major League Baseball players grew up and went to school in Gary.

3. A BRIEF HISTORY OF IU NORTHWEST

We are proud that the history of education in Gary and the Region includes Indiana University. The IU Northwest campus has roots that reach back to 1917 when IU first offered extension classes in Gary, Hammond, and East Chicago. In 1922, IU established a permanent office—the Gary Center—in the Gary Memorial Auditorium. The Calumet Center was established in East Chicago in 1932. In 1957, the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Gary Center at Indiana University took place. In 1963, IU Northwest campus was officially established.

The history of this campus now includes many more chapters and many names, like Robert McNeill, the campus' first official chancellor, and Chancellors Orescanin, Elliott, Richards, and Bergland.[2]

These leaders are part of the great history of leadership and partnership across the university and across the state. That history includes IU Professor Albert Woodburn, who first taught extension classes in Indianapolis, Chicago, and Louisville in the late 1800s. It includes the first director of the Extension Division Professor John J. Pettijohn and directors Robert Cavanaugh and Smith Higgins.

That history also includes the first vice president for regional campuses John Ryan, who later served as IU's 14th president. And now that history includes John Applegate, who recently accepted the position as vice president for university regional affairs, planning, and policy.

[2] This history also includes people like Albert Fertsch, the first secretary of IU's Gary Center; Hugh Norman, the first executive secretary of IU's Calumet Center; and Harold E. Burns, subsequent director of that same center, among others. It also includes Dr. John Buhner, who served as Director of the IU Northwest campus, and later as acting chancellor, but he left IU Northwest to become the first Dean of Faculties at IUPUI before he transitioned from acting chancellor to chancellor.

These campus and university leaders, along with countless faculty, staff, and students, have transformed this campus into what it is today. They helped build an intellectual community that is a vital part of this civic community and this entire region. Each one, in different ways, has embraced that urgent desire and dream Gary leaders voiced so many years ago: to have the IU Northwest Campus offer college degrees in as many areas as possible. That dream may seem modest now considering the great distance this campus has come.

4. INTRODUCING WILLIAM LOWE

Today that strong leadership continues as we officially welcome and install William J. Lowe as chancellor of the Northwest campus of Indiana University.

Having begun his duties on July 1st of this year, Bill may need no introduction. In fact, within the first few days of his tenure, he spoke with IU Northwest alumni, attended the Celebration of Excellence Awards luncheon for the Gary Community School Corporation, and he gave his first public address to the Gary Chamber of Commerce. All of that in addition to meeting with faculty, staff, and students on the IU Northwest campus. But let me take a moment to highlight Bill's accomplishments prior to his tenure at Indiana University.

Most recently, Bill served as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs—and for a brief period as Interim President—at Metropolitan State University in Minnesota. His achievements there range from strategic planning to recruiting a diverse and inclusive faculty and student body; from encouraging shared governance to improving labor relations; from establishing new doctoral programs to developing an effective financial/enrollment planning framework.

Current Metropolitan State President Sue Hammersmith says that "Indiana University Northwest is very fortunate to have as their new Chancellor someone of William Lowe's

breadth of experience, personal integrity, and absolute commitment to students and to the academic enterprise. Dr. Lowe is a scholar's scholar, and an administrator gifted with vision, resourcefulness, and imagination."[3]

Past president of Metro State Wilson Bradshaw reinforces the same ideas when he says that Bill was his "number one advisor on all university matters" and that "[h]e is an intelligent, articulate and thoughtful academician who has also distinguished himself as a very able academic administrator."[4]

Before his tenure at Metro State, Bill served as Vice President for Academic Affairs and professor of history at The College of Saint Rose in New York. Bill is a scholar of Irish history, focusing particularly on the Irish Constabulary, and he deepened his expertise in this area as a Fulbright Scholar in the Department of Modern History at Trinity College in Dublin where he had received his doctorate some years earlier. He also worked as a research assistant to Professor Oliver MacDonagh, one of the world's greatest Irish historians, from my alma mater the Australian National University.

Bill has also served as dean of the College of Liberal Arts and a professor of history at the University of Detroit Mercy in Detroit, and dean of graduate studies and professor of history at Chicago State University in Chicago.

I could add words about Bill's professional service, about the lectures he has delivered across the country and around the world, or about June 26th 2008 being proclaimed William J. Lowe Day in the city of Saint Paul, Minnesota.

It seems fitting to close this introduction with words from Bill's own address to the Gary Chamber of Commerce. He said, "[T]he point is that we . . . are in this together. . . . By drawing on our areas of strength and expertise, and sharing our aspirations, we can put

[3] Hammersmith, Sue K. Electronic correspondence with R.S. Wood used with permission. 15 Oct. 2010.
[4] Bradshaw, Wilson. Recommendation letter for Bill Lowe used with permission. 3 Mar. 2010.

some shape around what the future will look like and work toward it."[5]

Like that Gary delegation so many years ago, Bill Lowe is building towards a future of continuing partnership between the city and the university. This is a partnership based on shared aspirations and dreams, and it is a partnership of which all of us can be proud.

[5] "New IU Northwest Chancellor William Lowe pledges strong ties between his administration and the community." Indiana University Northwest Office of Marketing and Communications Website. 16 July 2010. <http://www.iun.edu/~newsnw/pg/2010/100716_newchancellor.shtml>.