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Franklin Hall Rededication
Remarks of Michael A. McRobbie
President, Indiana University
Presidents Hall
Franklin Hall
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2:00 p.m.

1. BUILDINGS THAT HAVE REGISTERED THE IMPRINT OF THE PASSAGE OF TIME

Adele Chatfield-Taylor, a renowned historic preservationist, once noted that there is “a hunger for the sight and touch of reality that old buildings provide—not impenetrably preserved buildings ...but buildings that have registered the imprint of the passage of time, buildings that are a time line.”¹

Moreover, as architect and preservationist Paul Kapp notes, historic university buildings are ideally not preserved as museum pieces. They are meant, in his words, “to be used first, and admired second.”²

These same sentiments—that our historic buildings provide a visible and tangible sense of our university’s heritage, and that their primary purpose is to be used in support of the university’s academic mission—are at the heart of today’s celebration of the splendid renovation of Franklin Hall.

¹ Adele Chatfield-Taylor, as quoted in Norman Tyler, *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to Its History, Principles, and Practice*, (W. W. Norton & Company, 2000), 14.

² Paul Kapp, as quoted in David R. Godschalk and Jonathan B. Howes, *The Dynamic Decade: Creating the Sustainable Campus for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2001-2011*, (University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 64.

2. RESTORING ACADEMIC AND STUDENT VITALITY TO THE OLD CRESCENT

In 2010, after a lengthy collaborative process led by University Master Planner David King of the SmithGroup, the Master Plan for IU Bloomington—a superlative blueprint for the future development of this campus—was completed and approved by our Board of Trustees. One important conclusion drawn from the Master Plan was that the way we were using the magnificent iconic buildings that comprise the Old Crescent—the historic core of the Bloomington campus—did not properly reflect the university’s core missions of education and research. Over a period of several decades, Franklin Hall and other buildings in this historic part of the campus were converted for use by administrative units. Students walked through this part of campus, but rarely had any cause to visit any of the buildings.

That has now changed in a major way with the renovation of Franklin Hall. As I said in my 10th annual State of the University earlier this month, it is a wonderful thing to see from the window of my office in Bryan Hall, students streaming out of this building, which has once again become a center of vibrant activity.

The other historic and iconic buildings of the Old Crescent are also coming fully back to life again and providing sorely needed contemporary resources to support the education and research mission of the university, as well as the extensive academic transformation that has been underway at Indiana University. The map room of the adjacent Student Building was renovated, in 2013, to house the new Collaborative Learning Studio, a truly superb high-tech classroom. The Student Building, incidentally, was renamed last week in honor of Frances Morgan Swain, the wife of IU’s ninth president, Joseph Swain, and the driving force behind the creation of that building. In 2014, we celebrated the renovation of Owen Hall, one of our two oldest buildings, which is now home to the administration of the College of Arts and Sciences, IU’s oldest and largest academic unit. Work on the renovation of Kirkwood Hall will finish within a few weeks, and it will become the home of the new School of Art and Design. And work

recently began on the first ever major renovation of Swain Hall, as well as the conversion back to student dormitories of most of the buildings of the Wells Quad.

3. A FITTING HOME FOR THE IU MEDIA SCHOOL

Following the completion in 2013 of the renovation of Presidents Hall, the superb space in which we are gathered today, work began on renovations to the remainder of Franklin Hall to transform it into a fitting home for one of IU's newest schools—The Media School—upon provision of the necessary funds by the State Legislature.

The Media School, inaugurated in 2014, brought together IU's programs in journalism, communication and culture, telecommunications, and film studies in response to the dramatic change the media environment has undergone in recent years. Entirely new platforms for content-delivery have emerged, including mobile devices connected to fast networks and systems, on-demand and interactive television services, and satellite radio.³ And these new technologies provide audiences with unprecedented control over when, how, and where they consume media. They have also led to a democratization of the creation, publishing, and distribution of media content. These developments constitute a watershed in human communication, and they are, of course, having profound effects in higher education, particularly, in the disciplines that specialize in media.

The magnificently renovated building we celebrate today is now an appropriate home for The Media School as it continues to grow. This 109-year old building is now home to state-of-the-art technologies that provide our students and faculty with the resources they need to meet the evolving challenges of today's media landscape.

³ This list is borrowed from Philip M. Napoli, *Audience Evolution: New Technologies and the Transformation of Media Audiences*, (Columbia University Press, 2011), 1.

These include 20 editing suites, 10 research labs, seven classroom computer labs, five game design labs, three open labs, two video production suites, a film screening studio, and an audio studio.

At the center of the building is a magnificent, open-concept commons, featuring a striking skylight composed of 40 panels of inch-and-a-half-thick glass—weighing nine tons—and equipped with polarizing filters that darken or lighten at the touch of a switch. And, of course, another impressive feature of the commons is the twelve-and-a-half by 24-foot video screen that can display a single feed or can be divided to broadcast up to six different displays.

4. SPECIAL THANKS

I would like to express my gratitude to some of the many people who helped make the remarkable transformation of Franklin Hall possible.

We are deeply grateful to the State Legislature for allocating funds to renovate this building and other Old Crescent buildings, and to protect the investment the people of Indiana have made in them over more than a century.

One of the magnificent production studios I mentioned a moment ago was made possible by a generous gift from two IU alumni, Ken and Audrey Beckley. Ken, who graduated with a degree in telecommunications, is a former news broadcaster, a former senior executive and spokesperson for HH Gregg, a former president of the IU Alumni Association, and a recipient of IU's Distinguished Alumni Service Award. Ken's wife, Audrey, worked as a medical technologist for nearly 30 years and has given extensive volunteer service to Indiana University and to many other causes and organizations. I believe the Beckleys are here today. Would you join me in thanking Ken and Audrey for their wonderful and generous gift?

I also want to commend Provost Lauren Robel, Executive Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences Larry Singell, Dean of The Media School Jim Shanahan, as well as all of the faculty and staff of the College and The Media School for all they have done to make the school a reality and so successful so quickly.

The Board of Aeons, a group of student leaders who advise me on matters related to the campus, conducted a semester-long study in 2010 and made a number of recommendations regarding the revitalization of the Old Crescent. This led to the establishment of the Old Crescent Academic Working Group—the group that developed a long-term plan for the return of the iconic buildings in the Old Crescent to academic purposes. I want to once again thank the Board of Aeons and those who served on that working group, as well as Tom Morrison, vice president for capital projects and facilities, who convened and led the group along with former Provost Karen Hanson.

And, of course, because the renovations are also in his purview, Vice President Morrison has played a major role in shaping this project, so our thanks go to him and to the many design and construction professionals, both internal and external, who contributed to this renovation. This renovation has been one of the most complex renovations we have ever done at IU, and Vice President Morrison and all of the design and construction professionals truly deserve our most grateful thanks for their superb efforts.

And, finally, I would like to thank our Trustees for their steadfast and enthusiastic support—not only for this renovation—but also for their support over recent years for the renovation, renewal, and repurposing of IU's existing facilities—such as all the buildings of the Old Crescent—and of the construction of new facilities across all of IU's campuses—and, more generally, for their continued and ongoing efforts to guard and care for the welfare of our institution.

5. CONCLUSION

The historic buildings, collegial and scholarly atmosphere, and natural beauty of the Bloomington campus of Indiana University remind us that this is the perfect setting for contemplating life's greatest questions and mysteries.

Now we have, in Franklin Hall, a building that not only restores academic and student vitality to this most historic part of the campus, but one that is also an important part of the history and traditions that are the bedrock on which that vitality is built.