

State of the University 2002
University Chapel, North Campus
January 17, 2002

Reams and reams have been written in the past few months about the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, our national reaction and the aftermath, which we are all still experiencing and will experience for years to come. The sense of security in America will never be the same.

The events of Sept. 11 made our hearts heavy. Together and alone, we wept and prayed and consoled each other, looking for sense in the non-sensible. But soon, in the greatest of American traditions, we rose to the challenge of our common tragedy, finding ways to help, one person at a time, one dollar at a time, one act of kindness at a time, reaching out across classroom aisles and residence hall corridors, across the streets of this city and the highways of this community. The memorial that grew to cover most of the steps leading to the Arch symbolized our common grief, but also our common resolve. Its many candles shed light where our attackers would prefer there be none; its letters and notes laid bare our souls and articulated our pain.

The great faculty of this university responded exactly as they should, with dialogue and symposia, providing opportunities for all of us to learn more about subjects and people unfamiliar to us. While understanding what happened on Sept. 11—and why—may be a step many of us are yet unable to take, I know that I have, in these past few months, confronted an image of America far different from my own perception of this country. It is probably good that I did, for convictions left unchallenged are not worth holding. Sept. 11 has caused me to ask hard questions about how I spend my time and effort and how I can better serve the many constituencies of this university, all of whom deserve attention because of their deep love for this institution.

I am doubly glad that as we begin the year 2002 I can stand before you and say that the state of the University of Georgia is strong and vibrant with a clear and bright future ahead. In this time of national tragedy, our country will call on us to train the leaders, educate the people and develop the knowledge and understanding that will

ensure that we come out of this better than we were before Sept. 11. Throughout our history, Americans have understood the value and power of education as a means to improve us as a people and a nation; we have long claimed that value at the University of Georgia and answered the call. Today, our understanding of that value is even greater, our desire to answer more urgent.

The mission of the University of Georgia has never been more important than it is today. I have spent most of my adult life in higher education because I believe in the transforming power of education, both for individuals and their societies. The role of this university in shaping a new generation of leaders has been magnified, not diminished. The need for increased understanding of the complex interactions in today's world is greater, not less. In years to come, Sept. 11, 2001, will be seen as both a tragedy and a point of triumph—a terrible day from which grew a stronger nation and, ultimately, a better world.

One year ago, this would have been a very different speech. Even as recently as late summer, this was going to be a very different speech. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that this would have been a very familiar speech, a speech not unlike other similar addresses both here and at other universities and colleges. There would have been a recitation of the significant events of the previous year and a call to rise to the challenges of the year to come. We would have noted our rising prominence in a series of national rankings; I would have proclaimed those with a smile and many of you would have smiled back, for all of us, every man and woman, every student and every teacher, every researcher and every administrator, every custodian and every lab technician, can and should take pride when this university is recognized for its quality, for quality is achieved by the whole.

No doubt there would have been references to the new millennium, with parallels drawn to some significant moments in UGA's history. I might have spoken of a new era of opportunity in research, of a new responsibility to prepare our students for the

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global economy, of the challenges of recruiting and retaining the best teachers and researchers, of our obligation to serve this state in new and undefined ways.

And then terrorists struck. I first heard the news while I was driving to work after an early morning speech to the Black Men of Athens. By the time I reached my office and turned on the television, the second plane was hitting the World Trade Center. Through the fog of disbelief, I realized what all of us did—that this was no terrible accident.

Like many of you, I have struggled with my personal value system since that day. Much of what I have long taken for granted may no longer be so certain.

Just as significant as the larger shifts in my perceptions of the world, though, are the many smaller ways in which I and, I suspect, many of you, have been affected. Gerry Powers, an administrator at Belfast University, a place, of course, which knows the impact of terrorism, says that "Terrorism results in ordinary people adopting a different approach to life." Much of what once seemed important is no longer important. Much of what once troubled me is no longer that imperative. I have noticed a thousand small kindnesses, one person to another. These seem to me to be tiny recognitions of our common humanity as well as an understanding of the ephemeral nature of our lives; we have been shaken awake by the terrible acts of a few, only to realize that life is precious and we have within us the ability to make it better.

Things that once irritated me now seem to be reminders that life must go on. Traffic lights remind me of the security of living in an orderly society under the rule of law. Chatter in a movie theater, voice mail, even junk mail remind me that this is a free nation that provides its people with choices and opportunities. Television commercials, radio talk shows, sirens, reporters—all of these now serve to ground me in the privilege of living in this country.

So what are we to make of our plans for the University of Georgia given the uncertainty that hovers over America today?

Are we bound somehow to justify what we—as individuals and as an institution—have set out to do? Is it yet too early to look to the future? Absolutely not. Our plans are critical not just to the future of the University of Georgia, but to the future of this state, this nation and this world.

"Real education," said Nancy Astor, the first woman elected to the House of Commons, "should educate us out of self into something far finer; into a selflessness which links us with all humanity."

I have been deeply touched by the stories of the victims and the heroes of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and of the plane which crashed in rural Pennsylvania. I learned from the denominational magazine of my church that one of the passengers aboard the Pennsylvania plane—the plane whose passengers had learned that other planes were being flown into landmarks in New York and Washington and who decided not to let that happen to their plane—was someone I knew at Pepperdine University. Tom Burnett was senior vice president for a company which manufactures medical devices. He was on his way home to San Ramon, Calif. He called his wife, Deena, and told her what was happening on board the plane and what he and other passengers were planning to do. And he told her he loved her.

The New York Times has made a remarkable and important commitment to writing a small profile story of each of the victims of the World Trade Center attacks. These profiles appear as a full page, with a photograph, every day of the week, with two pages in the weekend papers. As you might imagine, many of the articles are heart-rendingly poignant, stories of fathers who hurried home from work to spend a few minutes wrestling on the floor with young children before bedtime, a young mother whose first-born son was just learning to crawl, newlyweds with great plans for their life together, a gentleman who cared deeply about the condition of his front lawn.

Taken together, these small glimpses of lives taken away paint a portrait of American

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strength. I want to share with you now four of these portraits, taken from the New York Times of Nov. 25, 2001, the Sunday after Thanksgiving.

David Alger was 57, the CEO of Alger Management, a financial firm formerly run by his brother. He liked to take young money managers from his company to work at Wall Street coffee shops, order a cheeseburger and slice of apple pie, and talk to them about the business. One of his standard pieces of advice was that problems in companies—or in life—cannot be solved in one three-month financial reporting period. You have to look to the horizon, he would tell his young employees.

Edna Cintron, 46, was a woman who thrived on routine and organization, according to her husband. She enjoyed coming home from work as an administrative assistant at a Wall Street company and cooking dinner. After dinner, she and her husband would eat ice cream and watch television, creature comforts remarkable for two people who had been homeless and who had each struggled with alcoholism. "She was my backbone. She made me strong," her husband says of her.

Christopher Epps was an accountant at Marsh and McLennan. At 29, he was one of seven children and the devoted son of Geneva Epps; the two attended church together at Greater Zion Baptist Church. One year before the World Trade Center attacks, his mother had been honored by the church, and Christopher worked all night to memorize a poem he had written for the occasion, which ended with these verses:

Now I go through this life as a grown man
fast in your words

Please order my steps, for you are the
Father.

Others who love her call her Sister Epps,

But I am just proud to call her my
mother.

Anthony Jovic was 39, a lieutenant in the fire department of New York and the father of two boys, Matthew, 10, and Peter, 9. Each

day when he came home from work, the boys would run to him and ask if he had fought any fires that day. Lt. Jovic took a special interest in the brass plaques in the firehouse honoring those who had died in the line of duty; he researched those who had never been honored with a plaque, including one who died in 1921. On Sept. 11, 2002, a plaque will be installed with Lt. Jovic's name on it.

In these four small portraits, we see an older man mentoring young colleagues, a young African-American man whose dedication to his mother is heartwarming, a middle-aged couple who helped each other overcome difficult times and a fireman and father of young boys who gave his life in service to others. This is the best of America.

In the first hours and days following the attacks, I saw television reports of firefighters who went to New York from New Jersey, Virginia, Missouri and Michigan. One reporter asked a group of them if they had been called by the fire department of New York. "No," one of them said, pulling on his protective equipment, "we just came." Later, Peter Jennings of ABC was interviewing an emergency room physician who had been called to the scene. The doctor said that as he was leaving Ground Zero to walk to the studio for the interview, he saw his mechanic, who had brought his tow truck to the area to help clear the streets for emergency vehicles. No one had called him; he wasn't part of an emergency-preparedness team. He simply offered his talents and his equipment in a time of national need.

This, too, is the American spirit, often praised but rarely seen so clearly as it has been these past few months.

I am proud to say that I have seen the best of the American spirit here at the University of Georgia, and not only in response to the tragedies of Sept. 11. The UGA story, too, is a series of individual stories, of community spirit, of the power and strength of the cumulative impact of a thousand individual acts.

Heroes, it seems to me, are people who do what ought to be done. Randy Burris, a 1986

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graduate of this university, saved the life of a baby, whose mother he had met just minutes, before when he pushed the infant out of the path of an oncoming and out-of-control vehicle. He died a few days later, but his selfless act of courage and true heroism has inspired many, many people. We are privileged today to have his wife, Lori, and son, Nathan, in the audience. Today would have been Randy and Lori's 14th wedding anniversary; they met as students here. Mrs. Burris, on behalf of the University of Georgia, I want you to know that your husband honored all of us with his heroism, and you and Nathan honor us with your presence here today. Would you please join me in recognizing Lori and Nathan Burris.

The story of success at the University of Georgia is made up of those stories of individual commitments, sacrifices and contributions. The administrative role is nothing more than a catalyst, bringing together the components of excellence in an environment that allows them to thrive. For this institution, now 217 years old, to excel, we must all recognize that this is a community effort. Each of us is called upon to contribute his or her talents and skills to the success of the University of Georgia. The following examples from the previous year illustrate that point.

Almost one year ago to this day, we commemorated the heroic acts of two young people, Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes, who in 1961 became the first African Americans to enroll at the University of Georgia. Imagine the courage it took to walk through the Arch knowing full well the reception they would face from a small faction of the crowd on hand. I have read that "without fear there is no courage"; I have seen the fear and bewilderment on both their faces in some of the photographs from that era.

Because we no longer hold nor condone those kinds of biases at the University of Georgia—fears based on ignorance and lack of understanding—we have fought for the past four years for the right to be as inclusive as possible in our admissions policies, recognizing that the University of Georgia, by name and by mission, has an obligation to

serve all of its citizens. Not to do so would have been a mistake. I regret that we were not successful in the courts, but as Edward Dowden said, "Sometimes a noble failure serves the world as faithfully as a distinguished success."

Those footsteps as they passed through the Arch have echoed over the past four decades at the University of Georgia, reminding us of our obligation to serve the entire state, reminding us that education is the key to each individual's future, reminding us that one or two brave and committed individuals can not only make history, they can change history for the better. Please join me in recognizing Marilyn Holmes, the widow of Hamilton Holmes.

The path this institution has taken over the past four decades is one of progress in many areas. The story of our success is indeed the story of manifold individual successes, the successes and commitments of the faculty, students, staff and administrators who have walked this campus before us. Our obligation to them is to continue the proud tradition of excellence at the University of Georgia. In the year 2001, we did just that in a number of ways.

The freshman class which came to us in the fall brought with it the most outstanding credentials of any freshman class at the University of Georgia, an SAT average of 1206 and a core-curriculum GPA of 3.7. These students set the bar high; they ask much of us, but we are obligated to respond. They also enhance the academic environment of this campus in myriad ways.

The University of Georgia was ranked 18th among public research universities by U.S. News and World Report, our highest ranking ever and a move of eight spots in four years. The trend, more than any single ranking, is a clear indication of the very good work being done across this campus and reflects a commitment to quality and service that bodes well for the future.

We approved three new organizational units that will allow us to respond, through teaching, research and service, to some of the most critical needs facing society in this new

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century. Perhaps most significant, in the aftermath of Sept. 11, is the School of Public and International Affairs, which builds on the widely recognized strength of our departments in those areas. Second is the College of Environment and Design, clearly an area of strength and a pressing need in the state of Georgia and the world at large. And third is the Biomedical and Health Sciences Institute, which brings together the remarkable array of such research already ongoing at this university. In these three organizational moves, we have clearly signaled to this state that the University of Georgia is aware of the challenges ahead of us and committed to responding.

The research program here enjoyed its best year ever for external funding, bringing in some \$120 million and showing significant increases in grants from the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation. That trend, too, seems to be continuing, as we announced a series of grants in the fall totaling more than \$22 million. The leadership of our new vice president for research, Gordhan Patel, has played an important role in this trend and I thank Gordhan for his dedication.

Our students received a number of prestigious honors and awards, including four Goldwater Scholarships, which recognize outstanding accomplishments in mathematics, natural sciences or engineering. Semil Choksi, a student in our Honors Program, is currently studying in Cambridge as a member of the first class of Gates Scholars, a program modeled after the Rhodes Scholarship. The Achievement Rewards for College Scientists program has recognized seven UGA graduate students for their work in the biomedical and health sciences. The moot court teams of the School of Law competed in and won a number of regional competitions. Students from the Terry College of Business won Georgia's School Challenge, a competition sponsored by the National Association of Industrial and Office properties.

We were ranked among the top 20 institutions in the nation in the number of students having a study-abroad experience, a

critical component of preparing our students for the global economy.

We created the Real Estate Foundation, which has made a significant and literal impact on the landscape at the University of Georgia. I had high hopes for the Real Estate Foundation, but I must admit that I could not have imagined the level of success we have had so rapidly. The Carlton Street parking deck went from concept to operation in less than one year, compared to three-and-one-half years to build the North Campus deck through the standard state procedures. In downtown Athens on Broad Street, we have purchased, cleaned up, renovated and opened space for art students and environmental design students. Very shortly, we will begin both the East Campus residential project and the Riverbend Research Village. Please join me in recognizing Jo Ann Chitty, executive director of the Real Estate Foundation, and Jack Rooker, chair of the Real Estate Foundation.

Our athletic teams continue to perform well both on the field and in the classroom. UGA teams won national championships in men's and women's tennis and women's golf. The gymnastics team placed second in the national tournament, and overall we won a school record six Southeastern Conference championships. The baseball team competed in the College World Series, our men's and women's basketball teams competed in the NCAA tournaments and the football team finished the season ranked 22nd and played in the Music City Bowl. UGA placed third in the annual Sears Cup competition among major-college athletic programs.

Our athletes continue to represent us well outside the field of competition—swimmer Kim Black was named the NCAA Woman of the Year and a winner of the NCAA Top Eight Award, presented for achievements in athletics, academics, character and leadership. This is the fifth consecutive year that a UGA student-athlete has been named to the Top Eight, and the third time that a UGA female athlete has been named Woman of the Year.

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The various lecture series on campus attracted a wide variety of top speakers, from Steve Forbes to Cynthia Tucker to Lynn Margulis. Providing an opportunity for our students to hear a range of viewpoints is a critical part of our educational mission.

The tangible signs of progress are all around us, as construction on a number of significant projects is under way. The Student Learning Center is proceeding on schedule. I had the opportunity to tour that facility a few weeks ago, and the reality exceeded my imagination. It will have a tremendous impact on this campus and the learning environment that we want to create—and the view from the cupola is breathtaking. The Fanning Institute for Leadership is also well under way, and the conversion of D.W. Brooks Drive into a swath of South Campus greenspace and pedestrian mall has begun. In the very near future, we will begin construction of the first residence halls at UGA in 30 years on East Campus, and work is also soon to begin on the Riverbend Research Village.

The national media have begun to recognize the rising quality of the University of Georgia. In February, the New York Times wrote that "seemingly overnight, one of the South's largest public universities has become enormously competitive, able to pick and choose among the region's best high school seniors and demanding test scores that would have been unimaginably high just a decade ago." In two separate articles, the Wall Street Journal included us in a list of newly competitive schools which included both public and private institutions and labeled the University of Georgia one of its "Colleges for a New Era." This praise, in which we can all take some pride, is simply a recognition of the cumulative effect of thousands of people doing their best each and every day. We do our best not for the recognition but because of the kind of people we are, people who are committed to excellence, people who are committed to this university, people who are heroic in our everyday lives as we work for the University of Georgia. Recognition is a byproduct of doing things right.

I'd like to mention a few examples of the kinds of individual efforts that have produced tremendous results for the University of Georgia in the past year. Each of us has our own list of heroes, and mine is certainly not definitive. But it does reflect the impact that individuals can have when the goal is to serve the greater good. Are these acts the same scale of life and death heroism we saw in New York and Pennsylvania and Washington? No. But they are the kinds of heroism that the people of this campus carry out every day.

In late spring 1997, I sat at my desk holding an application file in my hands. The applicant was an athlete—a football player, to be precise—of some promise on the field. But he was also an NCAA partial-qualifier, meaning that his academic record did not fully meet the National Collegiate Athletic Association's requirements for admission. As president of the University of Georgia, I had the authority to grant admission to this young man, but I was struggling with the decision. Finally, I decided to admit Jermaine Phillips, and any of you who follow Georgia football know that was a pretty good athletic decision. Jermaine has excelled on the football field as we thought he would, and was named the SEC defensive player of the week following the Ole Miss game, when he returned an interception 82 yards for a touchdown, sealing a 35–15 road victory for the Bulldogs. At the annual football gala, Jermaine was named Player of the Year for the 2001 Georgia Bulldogs.

But Jermaine's victories on the field are not as impressive as his victories as a student at the University of Georgia. He has already earned a degree on time in health and physical education, and is currently enrolled in the College of Family and Consumer Sciences. He has been named to the Dean's List twice and is a member of the 2001 SEC Academic Honor Roll. Jermaine Phillips was given an opportunity, and he has made the most of it. I am convinced that Jermaine has a future of service to his community no matter where he goes from here. Please join me in recognizing Jermaine Phillips.

One of the greatest resources at the University of Georgia is the Georgia Museum

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of Art. Building on this institution's legacy of strength and leadership in the field of visual arts, the museum has developed a reputation for excellence in its permanent collection and an ability to attract touring exhibits that one might expect to see in large, metropolitan museums. I believe that the museum has just completed its most impressive year, with exhibits of master paintings from the Scottish National Gallery, works by American realist John Whalley and lithographs by Catalan artist Alvar Suñol. I have enjoyed these and other exhibits this year and am always pleased to see students there enjoying the exhibits, writing interpretations and taking advantage of this opportunity. We need to continue to tie the resources of the museum—indeed, the entire Performing and Visuals Arts Complex—to the academic process.

I believe that greatness is not achieved without direction and leadership. We are fortunate at the University of Georgia to have Bill Eiland at the Georgia Museum of Art, and I would ask that you join me in recognizing him.

Excellence in our traditional missions of teaching, research and service is recognized each year by honoring those individuals whose peers have selected them for the University of Georgia's top honors. Ed Larson, Chor Pang Lo and Richard Meagher received the Creative Research Awards last spring, this university's top award for research. Larson won the 1998 Pulitzer Prize for history for his book *Summer for the Gods*. He is widely recognized for his expertise in the history of science and his most recent book, *Evolution's Workshop: God and Science on the Galapagos Islands*, has been well received in both scholarly and popular circles. Lo, a professor of geography, specializes in the area of remote sensing, which is the art of extracting information about a subject without touching it. He has applied this technique to the study of the urban environment for estimating population and population characteristics; assessing the quality of life by integrating biophysical data with socioeconomic data; and detecting changes in urban land-use patterns and their

environmental impact. Meagher is a pioneer in the field of phytoremediation, the process of using genetically engineered plants to help clean up toxic-waste sites, a field with clear and exciting potential for addressing the pressing need to protect our environment. Please join me in recognizing Edward Larson, Chor Pang Lo and Richard Meagher.

The Josiah Meigs Award for Excellence in Teaching takes its name from the man who served as this institution's president 200 years ago, when the first class was taught here. In fact, Josiah Meigs was the sole faculty member at that time. Edward Azoff, a professor of mathematics, is one of four recipients of the Meigs Award for 2001. Known for his mathematical humor, Dr. Azoff is responsible for a long list of mathematics teachers and professors across America, all of whom credit him with inspiring their love of the subject and teaching it. His research into the fields of operator theory and measurable dynamics has been widely cited, and he has created a number of courses that are now standard to the mathematics curriculum at UGA. Please join me in recognizing Dr. Edward Azoff.

As a land-grant institution, we take great pride in our responsibility to serve the people. The annual Walter Hill Awards recognize those whose service recalls the legacy of President Hill, who clearly understood that the modern university must demonstrate its beneficial impact on the people. Elizabeth Andress, one of six recipients of the 2001 Hill Award, is one of those servants of the people. Her work in food safety and preservation, in particular the widely used "So Easy to Preserve" manual on home food preservation, has had a clear and positive impact on behalf of the University of Georgia. She represents the spirit of service that is at the heart of the land-grant mission. Please join me in recognizing Dr. Elizabeth Andress.

In February, a violent winter storm ripped through campus, toppling two of the stately old oaks on the library lawn of North Campus. In falling, their roots ripped great chunks of sod from the ground, and many of us feared that the wound would linger, a constant reminder of the loss of those trees.

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Yet within two weeks, our landscape team, under the direction of Dexter Adams, had removed the fallen trees and repaired the lawn so that even those of us who knew what had happened could not see the damage. The SACS accreditation team issued a special commendation to our grounds department for the overall appearance of our campus, and that recognition is well deserved. Please join me in recognizing Dexter Adams and the entire grounds crew.

I want to recognize the contribution of my campus soul-mate, Provost Karen Holbrook. I believe that university presidents get too much credit and too much blame for what does and does not happen at their institutions. Whatever successes we have had at the University of Georgia have been team successes. Karen Holbrook is one of those team players who does her job and does it exceedingly well without expectation of recognition. Today, I ask you to join me in recognizing the role she has played in propelling the University of Georgia along some very positive trend lines.

Finally, on Aug. 16, 2000, Matthew Ring, a lifeguard at the Ramsey Center, was on duty at the indoor pool, sitting in for a fellow lifeguard who was taking a break. A UGA freshman passed out while swimming, and Matthew pulled him to safety, performing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation until the ambulance arrived. The swimmer survived. Last summer, at the annual meeting of the East Georgia Chapter of the American Red Cross, Matthew received the American Red Cross Lifesaving Award for his heroic act. Please join me in recognizing the heroism of Matt Ring.

I would be remiss if I did not address the re-accreditation of this university for another 10 years by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. It is no surprise that were re-accredited; what is noteworthy is that the report of the visiting committee acknowledged the progress we had made and are making toward the three goals of our strategic plan: enhancing the undergraduate experience, maximizing research and expanding international opportunities.

Under the leadership of Bob Boehmer, a dedicated team of faculty, staff, administrators and students developed a plan to enhance the undergraduate experience for students at the University of Georgia. Through countless hours of volunteer effort, their work came to symbolize the teamwork that propels good institutions into the ranks of the great.

One of the messages in the aftermath of Sept. 11 is that our collective strength, whether it be here at the University of Georgia or in this nation or this world, is greater than our individual exploits. Together, with common goals and mutual commitment, we can and will achieve great good.

The great poet John Donne wrote, "No man is an island, entire unto itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main. . . . Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind." I am moved by a piece of data I received from the office of international education at the end of last year. Student interest in study abroad increased—increased—after the events of Sept. 11. Our students recognize that this world is their world, and that the better they know it, the better it will be.

I don't know what will happen in the year 2002. The University of Georgia faces many challenges. We have an admissions policy to develop. We're playing catch-up on facilities. External support, while increasing, is not where it should be for a top-20 university. The Terry College of Business has significant overcrowding, and some courses in other areas are underutilized. We have endured budget cuts for the first time in a decade.

But I'll tell you what I do know. I know to end this where I began, and that is with the thought that our myriad of stories is collectively greater than our individual tales. I know that we will continue to have heroic alumni like Charlayne Hunter-Gault and Randy Burris and Hamilton Holmes. We will enlist dedicated faculty like Ed Larson and Edward Azoff and Elizabeth Andress. We will continue to recruit and develop administrators like Gordhan Patel and Bill Eiland and Dexter Adams. We will educate

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and help mature students like Jermaine Phillips and Matt Ring.

The rubble of the World Trade Center was our rubble. Within it, three firemen found a battered American flag and raised it on a pole atop a heap of debris, and a nation was inspired. Our challenges are just that—our challenges. Together, we will overcome them. We will gallop, and perhaps dance, into the future, meeting these challenges together. I am proud to have been a small part of this team for almost five years, and I look forward to at least five more years of working with you.

Thank you.