

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on May, 1, 2016

Location: Hendricks Chapel

Remarks: Chancellor's Remarks at Society of Black Engineers Event

*The Chancellor was introduced by Miracle Rogers,
President of the Society of Black Engineers.*

Thank you, Miracle. Good morning.

Ruth and I want to thank everyone involved in organizing and supporting this wonderful event:

- The National Society of Black Engineers
- The Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Incorporated
- The many students, staff and student organizations willing to give their time and energy
- Mayor Stephanie Miner
- The Syracuse Common Council
- Superintendent of Schools Sharon Contreras
- The many colleges and offices that donated time and supplies including:
 - The College of Engineering Computer Science
 - The School of Education
 - University College
 - The College of Visual and Performing Arts.
 - The University Information Technology Services.
 - And the Syracuse University Bookstore.

This spring has been especially exciting for all of us at Syracuse University.

- Students and faculty from Syracuse were part of an effort that physically confirmed a key element of Einstein's Theory of Relativity.

- Our men's and women's basketball teams inspired all of us with their great runs to the Final Four.
- The Vice President of the United States, Joseph Biden, a graduate of our College of Law, will soon visit our campus to speak at the College of Law commencement.

Yet I can tell you this with complete sincerity: This "Walk for Education" reaffirms the most powerful aspirations on this campus.

The roots of the event are intertwined with the imperative that all children, in the heart of a city, should meet collegiate role models who excel in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. This has been one of my favorite events in Syracuse since I joined in the walk in autumn 2014, during my first full semester on campus.

I watched our students in action. I watched as our young men and women interacted with boys and girls who might never have envisioned themselves at college. How important were those conversations?

Let me venture this guess: Each of you had someone in your life who supported you.

There was someone who gave you faith that you could attend Syracuse. Someone gave you the courage to believe you could succeed once you were here.

Maybe it was a parent. Or a mentor. Or a friend. Or a teacher.

That is how lives change. It happens in small, quiet moments, the ones you cannot anticipate. You will go to many homes today. You will speak to many families about the opportunities on this campus, so close to their homes.

My feeling is that your work will spread great joy and hope. But let us say, for the purpose of argument, that in all your collective efforts today, you only affect a single child. Just one.

Let us say that only one girl or boy who did not dream of Syracuse University until today suddenly believes an education here is possible.

It makes all the work worth it. A single life changed is never an "only." To transform one life, to shine one light, is as high a purpose as you can achieve through education.

We live and work on a campus where I consider all of us to be part of the extended family of Syracuse University. But we are also part of the larger community surrounding us.

We can never forget that the small child who looks with wonder at our campus from the other side of Almond Street is already facing choices built on dreams and fears.

What higher purpose than to build those dreams and calm those fears? It is exactly what all of you seek to do today.

I offer my thanks to members of the National Society of Black Engineers for not only feeling this commitment, but for acting upon it.

Ten years from now, there may be young men or women preparing for this same event whose lives were changed because one of you had the heart and vision to knock on someone's door.

The very definition of education demands that you reach back. For that reason, you make me proud. Syracuse University rises only as high as our students and staff can carry us. Moments like this make me think we can rise very high, indeed.

Thank you.

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