

Syracuse University

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud
Delivered on November 11, 2017
Location: Hendricks Chapel
Remarks: Veterans Day Observance

Good morning. I am Kent Syverud, Chancellor and President of Syracuse University. I welcome you to the 2017 Syracuse University Veterans' Day observance.

First, let me thank all of you, including the corps of cadets, who joined me for the 5K Veterans Day "fun run" at 6:00 this morning. The Reverend Brian Konkol had the fastest time. As is a Syracuse tradition, the Chancellor brought up the rear. Paul's letter to the Hebrews says "let us run with perseverance the race that is before us." Dean Konkol, we all now know you take that passage very literally.

I would also like to thank the many folks who worked hard to enable a week's worth of Veteran's Day celebrations and events at Syracuse University. Those people include: Ron Novack, Lauren Pyland and Margaret Lambrecht of the Office of Veterans and Military Affairs;

- The team at the Veterans Resource Center;
- The cadets, Syracuse University staff and cadre of our Army and Air Force ROTC programs; and
- All members of the SU Veterans Day Planning Committee.

Can you join me in thanking all of them?

Even more importantly, I want to thank every veteran here today – whether you are a current student, faculty, staff, alumni, parent, sibling, or friend. Thank you for what you have done for our nation. In particular,

thank you for what you have done, and will continue to do, to make Syracuse University a great, thriving engaged international research university that fully supports veterans and military families.

Your efforts have helped make Syracuse University one of the best places in America for veterans. This year Syracuse University was ranked the #1 private school and #3 overall by the Military Times in its Best for Vets 2017 rankings.

As part of this effort we continue to expand and grow our enrollment of veteran and military-connected students. During the past three years, we have nearly tripled the number of veteran and military-connected students on campus. We expect that number to continue to grow rapidly in the coming years.

This university-wide commitment to be the best place for veterans will be physically manifested when we break ground in the coming weeks to build the Syracuse University National Veterans Resource Complex.

The NVRC will be a class-leading building, a national exemplar of academic, government, and community collaboration. It will leverage public and private support to ensure that Syracuse University remains the best in the nation for research, actionable programming, and collaboration in support of our nation's service members, veterans, and their families. It will be symbol of this commitment in the midst of our campus.

The NVRC will be a state of the art home of many of our veteran and military programs. This includes brand new space for both our Army and Air Force ROTC corps. Syracuse University is home to the oldest, continuously operating Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program in all of America, founded in 1918. The complex will open in Spring of 2020. I hope all many of you will be here or return to campus to help cut the ribbon.

My official mission this morning is to introduce this year's keynote speaker. She is a woman of great distinction, courage, and heart. This year, we welcome Command Sergeant Major (Retired) Cynthia Pritchett to our Veterans Day Ceremony. Command Sergeant Major Pritchett is a trailblazer for women in the military. She joined the Women's Army Corps in 1973, years before it was integrated into the regular Army.

Cindy went on to become the longest serving female command sergeant major in the history of the U.S. Army. Her final assignment – after 36 years of military service – was as the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Commander of U.S. Central Command, known as US CENTCOM. She currently works as the strategic planner for the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies and serves as their Liaison to U.S. Central Command in Tampa, Florida.

In her 36 years of service, Cindy earned numerous decorations and awards, including the Defense Superior Service Medal, three awards of the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, three awards of the Meritorious Service Medal, five awards of the Army Commendation Medal, two awards of the Army Achievement Medal, and the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

In 2008, the Army News Service published a profile of Cindy. It coincided with the 30-year anniversary of the full integration of women into the Army and the disestablishment of the Women's Army Corps.

In the profile Cindy describes the initial challenges she and her fellow female soldiers faced as integration began. "It was bumpy at first," Cindy said. She recalled a company commander who wanted to interview her to make sure she could handle the responsibility of leading troops. "If I were a male, there would have been no interview," Cindy said. "But over time I felt I was part of a team; I received the same opportunities as men."

Ultimately, Cindy said, she loved that “we are all working toward the defense of the nation” and “...we have led the way in getting America to understand and accept diversity.”

I know Cindy will share more of her story. I would simply say that she inspires all that I feel on Veterans Day: pride, humility, and deep gratitude.

Ladies and gentlemen, would you please stand, and join me in welcoming, Command Sergeant Major (Retired) Cynthia Pritchett.

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