

# SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on November 11, 2015

Location: Hendricks Chapel

Remarks: Chancellor's Remarks at the 2015 University Veterans Day Ceremony

*The Chancellor remarks followed the presentation of a service flag which was presented in honor of all veterans.*

Good morning. I am Kent Syverud, Chancellor and President of Syracuse University. I welcome you to 2015 Syracuse University Veterans' Day observance.

Before I introduce today's keynote speaker, I would like to thank some people.

First, I thank the folks who organized today's program, especially:

- Ron Novack, executive director of Veteran and Military Affairs here at Syracuse
- Peg Stearns, director of the University's Veterans Resource Center
- Captain Bruce King, Air Force ROTC
- Lieutenant-Colonel Jason Warner and Captain Lloyd Bedford, Army ROTC
- Carie McDonald, from University College
- And all of the Veterans' Day planning committee

Second, I want to thank all veterans who are here today. You are standing as representatives today for thousands upon thousands of veterans who have passed through this chapel. They include many of our students and staff who did not return from war, and who we remember in this chapel on its walls inside and out. Today I am not going to say "thank you for your service". That needs to be said and I know many will say it. Instead, today I thank all veterans, seen and unseen, for what you have done to build a great University. The most frequent thing a Syracuse student or alumnus says to me is "Syracuse took a chance on me and I have made the most of it." That is a very different narrative

than I hear on other campuses in 2015. As I have often said, our unique culture here combines humility with ambition- an acknowledgement that each of us has lots to learn here and an ambition to get a lot done here. Where did that unique culture come from? I think a lot of it came from our thousands of Veterans and military families, going back many decades. A culture of both humility in service and eagerness to achieve- that's a veteran culture.

I thank our veterans every day for that culture at Syracuse University. We here believe the way to show our thanks is to make every day at this University, Veteran's Day.

We can make every day Veteran's Day here because of our unique historic commitment to veterans. We can make every day Veteran's Day because of the national leadership of our Institute for Veterans and Military Families and our Office of Veteran's and Military Affairs. And we can make every day Veteran's Day because the faculty, staff and students from every part of this university--from University College, the libraries, the humanities, the athletic department, the machine shop, the traffic and parking office, the social sciences, the professions and the sciences- the people from all parts of this university have embraced this mission over the past two years. I am so proud of all our people for doing so.

My orders this morning are to introduce today's keynote speaker. He is a man who has distinguished himself time and again for his courage, collaborative spirit, and outstanding strategic leadership.

Brigadier General Michael A. Fantini is the principal director for Middle East Policy in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Office of the Secretary of Defense, at the Pentagon. In that capacity, he conceives and provides oversight of defense policy and national security strategy for 14 Middle East nations.

He also coordinates with the National Security Council, Congress, partner governments, combatant commanders and others in the development and execution of Department of Defense policy for the Middle East.

Brigadier General Fantini was commissioned into the Army in 1986 through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Howard University. In the ensuing three decades, he has held a variety of leadership assignments, including

commanding both a fighter squadron in Balad, Iraq, and then the 451<sup>st</sup> Air Expeditionary Wing in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

In 2013, he was appointed commander of the Kandahar Airfield. He was responsible for operational efficiency and readiness of the airfield and working collaboratively to ensure security across the region.

The General is a command pilot with more than 3,200 flight hours, he has also served as chief of the Fighter Weapons Branch, Secretary of the Air Force Office of Special Programs; and Operations Officer and Deputy Division Chief of Global Force Management at the Joint Operations Directorate.

He has earned more than a dozen major awards and decorations for his distinguished leadership and service. They include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, the Bronze Star with oak leaf cluster, and the Defense Meritorious Service Medal.

A graduate of The Catholic University of America, Brigadier Gen. Fantini earned master's degrees in aeronautical science from Embry-Riddle University, Daytona Beach, Florida; and in national security studies from the National War College in Washington, D.C.

Ladies and Gentlemen, join me in welcoming our keynote speaker, Brigadier General Michael A. Fantini.

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