

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on March 17, 2014

Location: Carnegie Library

Remarks: Chancellor's Remarks at the 2014 Carnegie Library Re-Dedication

The Chancellor was introduced by Matthew Dames, Interim Dean of Libraries.

Thank you, Matthew. It is great to be here and to have the opportunity to say a few words about this fantastic space and what it represents.

I would like to echo Matthew's thanks to all those who made this renovation and rededication possible. The Carnegie Library reading room is one of those distinctive spaces on campus that really make Syracuse University such a special place. I am glad you have taken such careful work to preserve that distinctiveness in a way that continues to meet the evolving needs of students.

When I first walked in here in January, I was immediately struck by what an extraordinary asset this space represents for our University and especially for our students. Stepping into this reading room, you could easily feel as if you had stepped back in time 100 years. To be in this place is to feel very much in community with all those who came here in past decades seeking books, information, or a little solitude for study. That is a great feeling.

I am glad that several dozen of our alumni from 1950 through 1971 who remember this building as their main library were able to join us for this rededication. I am sure each one of you has wonderful memories of your time spent here in pursuit of deeper "knowledge and understanding."

I am honored that my first day as Chancellor, January 13th, just happened to coincide with the reopening of the reading room. I will always remember walking up those steps off the quad, through the newly reopened main doors and the vestibule with its wonderful statue of Diana the Huntress, and into this soaring

space. That visit was a real treat, and I will always remember it as a highlight of that day.

As faculty members, as students, as administrators, as lifelong learners, we go to the library to find answers, to study and research, to read, and to think. Libraries are essential to our scholarship and to our intellectual growth.

We are very fortunate to have many wonderful library facilities on campus, but Carnegie Library holds a very distinctive place in SU's history. It served as SU's main academic library for more than 60 years, from 1907 until Bird Library opened in 1972. Since then it has been an information resource for the sciences, mathematics, and engineering, and as the academic home for the mathematics department.

The library originally was built with the help of a \$150,000 gift from Andrew Carnegie, an industrialist and philanthropist who built more than 2,500 libraries as a means to advance what he called "the diffusion of knowledge and understanding."

A place to advance the "diffusion of knowledge and understanding": That is a great definition of a library.

As a reader, I am already partial to libraries. I know everyone here would surely agree that university libraries are very special and unique places. They are at the heart of all that goes on here and central to our purpose – learning.

It is impossible to stand here and not be impressed by this iconic physical space. But what *happens* when you come inside here is even more wonderful. The library sits near the geographical heart of campus. Its front entrance faces out over a very busy Shaw Quad with a steady flow of students making their way to and from classes and other activities.

But when students come up those steps and through those doors, they find a haven from the distractions of daily life and a quiet solitude that invites contemplation and deep thought.

While the desire for quiet study space is timeless, other needs of today's students have evolved considerably. So in addition to study tables and book stacks, the reading room has incorporated features that reflect current technological needs and trends, like LED table lighting and wireless Internet hubs.

I am so grateful that this renovation project perpetuates our Carnegie Library's legacy and purpose as a place that nurtures intellectual discovery for future generations of students and scholars.

Thanks to all those who made this project possible and to all of you here for joining in the rededication and celebration of this wonderful space.

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