

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on November 11, 2021

Location: NVRC, K.G. Tan Auditorium

Remarks: Veterans Day Ceremony

*The Chancellor was introduced undergraduate student in Public Relations and U.S. Marine Corps Veteran, Charlie Poag.*

Good Morning!

Veteran’s day at Syracuse University is a day for remembering and honoring those who have worn the uniform.

Today I want to call out two of our Syracuse University veterans.

One veteran is someone I want us all to remember and honor because of where we are met today, in this spectacular building, the D’Aniello Building.

This veteran was champion member of the rowing team who graduated from Syracuse University and went on to earn a medical degree and to become a specialist in otolaryngology – in speech and hearing. He helped found a hospital in China and staffed it, then came back to join the faculty at Syracuse University, where he co-founded the Department of Special Education at the University – he was highly focused on education of children with hearing disabilities, and thus started this University on its path to be a leader in the world in research and teaching on Disabilities.

He enlisted in the Army at the start of World War II, when he was in his mid-40s, and won the Bronze Star for his service in military hospitals in war zones in Asia. After the war he devoted himself to veterans with hearing loss. He served on the University Board of Trustees, and then Chaired the Board, and was a key partner with Chancellor William Pearson Tolley in embracing veterans at this University.

He loved his country, his University, and his veterans. At his retirement, the University named a building for him, Gordon Hoople Hall, which was a squat two story brick building that housed our special education programs on precisely the spot where I am now speaking. Gordon Hoople’s spirit, I believe, would be troubled by the replacement of his building, except for one thing, the National Veteran’s Resource Center. In the hall of honor downstairs, you will find a display honoring and remembering Gordon Hoople as part of the spirt of this building.

I recall Hoople to you today to emphasize that it is not a new thing for our veterans at this University to make this a better place in fields well beyond those traditionally associated with the military. Our veterans serve across this campus and our programs around the world, as faculty, as staff, as alumni, as trustees, and they are a key ingredient of why Orange is the best color of all.

The University has continued to call on veterans when it is in need. There is another veteran here today. He had planned to spend 2020 finishing this building and advancing our agenda for education and technology and veterans around the world. He did not plan to spend all of 2020, and all of 2021, keeping all of us safe and moving forward on our mission despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

But that is what he ended up doing when his University called. 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for the last many months J. Michael Haynie has provided all of us a continuing seminar in leadership. Today we celebrate J. Michael Haynie, Vice Chancellor of Syracuse University, for what he has done in the last decade to elevate veterans and military connected students and their families here and all over the country – and also what he has done in the last two years to be the University’s successful Covid-19 czar. He has lead faculty, staff, students, public health experts, community leaders, government officials and everyone else to achieve what to many seemed impossible: Syracuse University has remained open and in person for almost of the pandemic, and has remained largely healthy and safe, especially compared to almost all our peers, throughout this period.

Mike is no doubt mortified every time we acknowledge it, but acknowledge it publicly we must continue to do. This University was and still is incomparably better because of what Gordon Hoople did here and we remember.

This University is incomparably stronger today than ten or two years ago, because of what Mike Haynie has done and we will remember. And this University will be incomparably stronger in the future because of what Mike has done.

For that reason, it is my honor to present today the Chancellor’s Medal, University’s highest honor, created by William Pearson Tolley, Vice Chancellor J. Michael Haynie. Will the audience please rise in body or in spirit, and Vice Chancellor, will you please step forward?

Congratulations.

# # #