



Remarks from President of Creighton University, Fr. John P. Schlegel, S.J.
The Mike and Josie Harper Center for Student Life and Learning
Topping Off Ceremony – July 19, 2007

TODAY IS AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE FOR CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY AS WE RAISE THE FINAL BEAM ON THE MIKE AND JOSIE HARPER CENTER FOR STUDENT LIFE AND LEARNING.

THIS CENTER GIVES CREIGHTON A DISTINCT COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AS WE SEEK TO ENROLL OUTSTANDING STUDENTS FROM ACROSS THE NATION.

STUDENTS TODAY WANT AND EXPECT AN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE THAT FAR SURPASSES WHAT HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN THE PAST. THEY WANT THE HIGHEST QUALITY ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE, BUT THEY WANT IT INTEGRATED WITH MODERN LIVING ACCOMMODATIONS AND A VARIETY OF SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL AS WELL AS SPIRITUAL OPPORTUNITIES.

THAT IS ONE REASON WHY THE HARPER LIVING/LEARNING CENTER, AS WELL AS OPUS HALL AND DAVIS SQUARE ARE IMPORTANT, AND WHY WE BUILT THE MORRISON SOCCER STADIUM.

ANOTHER REASON IS THE SYNERGISM CREATED BY OUR EAST CAMPUS EXPANSION AND THE REDEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES OF DOWNTOWN OMAHA AND THE RIVERFRONT.

CREIGHTON IS COMMITTED TO BEING A COMMUNITY RESOURCE. OUR EAST CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT—A VITAL COMPONENT OF OUR *WILLING TO LEAD*

CAMPAIGN—REFLECTS OUR COMMITMENT TO DOWNTOWN OMAHA'S CONTINUED REVITALIZATION AND STABILITY.

I JOIN THE CREIGHTON COMMUNITY IN SAYING THANK YOU TO THE WOMEN AND MEN WHO HAVE CONSTRUCTED THIS IMPRESSIVE FRAMEWORK. A PROJECT OF THIS SIZE HAS MANY CHALLENGES. I CITE BUT ONE EXAMPLE OF A CHALLENGE ADMIRABLY MET: THE 90-FOOT BALLROOM TRUSS, WEIGHING ALMOST 19 TONS, WAS SET IN PLACE WITH THE HELP OF A 300-TON CRANE IN THE FIRST ATTEMPT. CONGRATULATIONS!

FOR ALL OF US—WORKERS, STUDENTS, STAFF AND FRIENDS--THIS BUILDING IS MORE THAN BRICKS AND MORTAR, STEEL AND CONCRETE. THIS BUILDING WILL BE THE PULSE POINT OF A VITAL COMMUNITY, A PLACE THAT WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE LIVES AND EXPERIENCE OF COUNTLESS CREIGHTON STUDENTS AND OMAHA CITIZENS FOR GENERATIONS.

SO THANK YOU.

MIKE HARPER CAN ALSO BE PROUD, AND WE THANK HIM FOR HIS ON-GOING COMMITMENT TO CREIGHTON AS WELL AS TO DOWNTOWN OMAHA.

MIKE, AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BEAUTIFUL CONAGRA CAMPUS. FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS, HE WAS CHAIRMAN AND CEO OF CONAGRA. AT THE SAME TIME HE SERVED ON CREIGHTON'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

BY HIS NATURE, MIKE HARPER HAS ALWAYS BEEN *WILLING TO LEAD*, AND HE'S PROVED IT AGAIN BY PUTTING HIS NAME, AND THAT OF HIS LATE WIFE, JOSIE, ON THE FLAGSHIP BUILDING OF OUR AWARD-WINNING CAMPUS MASTER PLAN. THE HARPER GIFT WILL FUND THE ON-GOING OPERATIONS OF THE LIVING/LEARNING CENTER. MIKE UNDERSTANDS, MUCH TO OUR RELIEF,

THAT IT ISN'T JUST THE COST OF BUILDING THE BUILDING THAT IS IMPORTANT.

I AM PLEASED TODAY TO ANNOUNCE THAT MIKE HARPER'S EXAMPLE IS BEING FOLLOWED BY OTHER OUTSTANDING DONORS.

THEIR NAMES ARE ALSO FAMILIAR TO THE CREIGHTON COMMUNITY. THE MUTUAL OF OMAHA FOUNDATION'S NAME WILL APPEAR PROMINENTLY ON ***THE MUTUAL OF OMAHA STUDENT HEALTH AND COUNSELING CENTER.*** PLEASE JOIN ME FIRST IN THANKING THE MUTUAL OF OMAHA FOUNDATION AND ITS PRESIDENT, CHRISTINE JOHNSON.

LONG-TIME BOARD MEMBER AND PRESENT CHAIRMAN, BILL FITZGERALD AND HIS WIFE, BARBARA, WHO COULD NOT BE WITH US TODAY, SHOULD ALSO BE THANKED FOR THEIR GENEROSITY AND LOYALTY TO CREIGHTON. NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE FITZGERALDS HAVE CHOSEN TO ATTACH THEIR NAMES TO THE NEW HARPER CENTER BOARD ROOM ON THE FOURTH FLOOR.

THESE GIFTS FUEL OUR MOMENTUM! LET ME ADD, HOWEVER, THAT THERE REMAIN SEVERAL SIGNIFICANT NAMING OPPORTUNITIES: SPECIFICALLY, A SPECTACULAR BALLROOM, THE VERY IMPRESSIVE 500 SEAT THEATRE, THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT OFFICES, THE CENTER FOR SERVICE AND JUSTICE, AND TEN SMART CLASSROOMS, TO NAME BUT A FEW. SO NO ONE SHOULD FEEL LEFT OUT! THIS WILL BE A GREAT BUILDING!