

Founders Week Gala

Oct. 26, 2019
Hyatt Regency Baltimore

Good evening, everyone. I add my gratitude to Denise's. Thank you so much for joining Andrea and me tonight. This Gala is a celebration—a celebration of our past, present, and future—and I'm extraordinarily grateful each year for the amazing support of UMB's family and friends.

I'm now in the 10th year of my UMB presidency, and I need to tread carefully here ... because when I said as much during my State of the University Address last spring, there was a ripple through the audience. So let me be very clear tonight: I HAVE NO PLANS TO RETIRE. So much of my past 10 years has been focused on forging a greater University—a greater UMB—out of seven exceptional schools. “Seven schools |One university.”

Of course, I would need to do that without diminishing each school's identity, though diminishing is—quite frankly—impossible anyway. Our schools have long earned and long held exceedingly high national rankings. They are known for their excellence, across the country and around the world.

And so what has given me so much pride is that, as our schools' individual stars have risen, the entire constellation has also risen in kind. And where we find our commonalities as schools— those areas where our interests align and our strengths intersect—we are, as a University, absolutely unstoppable: internationalization, interprofessional education, research and discovery, economic development, community engagement.

We have embraced our obligations as an anchor institution for the citizens of this city and state. And, in so doing, we have defined and re-defined—over and over again— what a premier public research university can and should be.

You know, when I first accepted the job as president of UMB, I thought my office would be in the storied, iconic Davidge Hall. For those of you who don't know, before my presidency, I'd spent many years at UMB on the faculty as chair of Pediatrics in the School of Medicine. And back then, the president of the University was in Davidge Hall.

When I was told, instead, that I'd be on the 14th floor of building on the northwest end of campus—above a parking garage, mind you—I was, let's just say, surprised.

Ah, but what a privilege I have to work in that office! From wraparound windows, I see Downtown. I see West Baltimore. I see our seven schools. I see the whole of UMB. I see the power of our physical presence. I see the breadth of communities and people

we serve, all very different from one another. I see so clearly who we are and why we matter.

And it is all of you who make it so. I can't begin to thank you for the work you put in every day: for solving our grandest challenges, and caring for our neediest people, and teaching, training, mentoring our incredible students, for supporting all of our efforts to improve the human condition with a generosity of heart and spirit I can scarcely comprehend.

We are the ones who boldly make change and humbly serve others. We are the hope, and we are the future. We ARE UMB.