



Office of the President

Selected Speeches

Founders Week Gala

Oct. 17, 2015
Hyatt Regency Baltimore

My wife, Andrea, and I are delighted to welcome you to our 20th Annual Founders Week Gala! We consider ourselves so very fortunate to celebrate this milestone with all of you—our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and dear friends.

I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge a few of these friends.

Acknowledgements

The Governor's Chief of Staff, Craig Williams, is here with us. Craig, I thank you for the goodwill that you and Gov. Hogan have shown this University—and for the friendship you've shown me personally. We look forward to working with the Governor and the entire administration to advance Maryland higher education.

Representing the University System of Maryland Board of Regents are Gary Attman and Tom Slater. Gentlemen, you and your fellow Regents make our daily work possible. Thank you for your guidance.

To the deans of UMB's seven schools, to the members of the schools' Boards of Visitors, to the leadership of this University, thank you for setting our direction, living our mission, and faithfully executing our goals.

To all of our donors, we're profoundly grateful for your support of our students, our scholarship, and our service. Your generosity is our lifeblood.

To tonight's sponsors—listed in your programs—we quite literally wouldn't be here without you. I offer a special acknowledgement to Whiting-Turner—serving, once again, as the gala's platinum sponsor. Tim Regan, thank you.

Finally, to the members of the UMB Foundation Board of Trustees, thank you for so ably positioning UMB for the future.

I must especially acknowledge Janet Owens, who will be stepping down as chair of the Foundation Board next week. When Janet assumed the chairship in 2010, the Foundation's assets totaled \$155 million. Today, they're valued at nearly \$274 million.

Janet led the launch of our Scholarship Matching Program, which I'll talk about a little later. She oversaw substantial growth in our fundraising operation. And she was at the helm during the transition in University leadership—from Dr. Ramsay to me. Janet, the University is absolutely indebted to you for your strong and faithful stewardship.

I just mentioned Dr. Ramsay, and I know many in this room might be thinking of him right now. After all, our annual Founders Week—the week we kick off with this gala celebration—it was the brilliant brainchild of Dr. Ramsay and his wife, Anne.

Dr. Ramsay wrote me a letter on the occasion of our 20th anniversary, and I'd like to share part of it with you.

Dear Jay: It is hard for Anne and me to believe it's been 20 years since we introduced Founders Week, and it has now become a tradition.

When I arrived to take on the presidency of UMB, there were two immediate problems to tackle: little sense of campus and low morale.

Anne and I set about designing an event where we could celebrate the achievements of the University, thank all sectors of our community, faculty, and students, and help build pride in UMB.

We shall be thinking of you and our many friends in Baltimore, particularly on the night of the Gala.

What 20 years has wrought! I am brimming with pride to be part of this University community. And I'm filled with gratitude that we host this wonderful week each year to celebrate the amazing people and essential work of UMB.

Accomplishments

And now the moment you've all been waiting for: This is the part where I tell you—in painstaking detail—everything UMB has accomplished over the past 20 years. And I ask security to bar the exits. (Of course I wouldn't do that to friends.)

So consider this the highest of highlights.

Certainly, we have grown over the last 20 years—in size, in scholarly impact, and in economic power. We've gained 20 buildings since 1996—and 3 million square feet of the best teaching, research, and clinical care space.

New state-of-the-art facilities for the schools of dentistry, pharmacy, and nursing reflect their roles as standard bearers for their professions. Our Health Sciences and Human Services Library, opened in 1998, consistently ranks among the country's best. The Nathan Patz Law Center, dedicated in 2002, marks the first time alumni from the Carey School of Law worked together on a major philanthropic project.

But over the course of this historic building boom, I truly believe that our boldest move was the one we took in 2003, when we crossed Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. to make a thriving science and technology park out of abandoned city blocks and, with our BioPark, put ourselves within arm's reach of our West Baltimore neighbors.

Twenty years from now, when UMB's president is giving an account of the two decades past, I hope she will cite as one of our greatest accomplishments the transformational difference we've made in West Baltimore.

I hope she will credit our sustained presence in the community—the jobs we create, the projects we develop, the people we serve—with having helped spark a West Baltimore renaissance.

With our neighbors and dedicated community partners, we have a vision for what's possible in West Baltimore. That vision includes a permanent home for our new UMB Community Engagement Center. You'll be hearing about our plans very soon, and I hope we can count on your support.

Because what we do here matters. What we do here is the *hope* for millions of people.

Our School of Social Work has created the largest children's mental health training center in the country, driving better mental health care for children nationwide. The school's Family Connections program, now replicated across the U.S., is recognized as the only evidence-based program to prevent child neglect.

The School of Medicine is transforming cancer care, genomics, transplantation, and trauma care.

And it's made some of the most significant advances in vaccine development around the world, with work leading to new vaccines for cholera, typhoid fever, and malaria. The school conducted the very first U.S. vaccine trials for Ebola, and just this month, began clinical trials for an HIV vaccine.

The School of Pharmacy has emerged as a pioneer in patient-centered research, engaging patients like never before in their own care, asking them about the outcomes they consider most important and then centering care on those priorities. What a smart and supremely compassionate thing to do.

The Carey School of Law has developed several nationally ranked specialty programs—Clinical Law, Environmental Law, Law and Health Care, and Trial Advocacy—training the next generation of thought leaders in some of the most complex legal frontiers of the next century.

The School of Nursing has landed its highest national ranking in school history—#6 on the *U.S. News & World Report* list. And that's because, across the spectrum—in nursing informatics, clinical nurse leader, gerontology, nurse practitioner, nursing anesthesia, and more—our School of Nursing is among the very best.

Our School of Dentistry has strengthened its foundational sciences and has integrated the basic and clinical sciences to drive the school into the top tier for research training. It now ranks fifth among U.S. dental schools in funding from the National Institutes of Health.

Our Graduate School is pioneering scholarship in areas like thanatology—studying the needs of terminally ill patients and the loved ones who grieve for them. It's a deeply human and humane field of study. We're creating the caregivers who can capably and compassionately help individuals through death, dying, and bereavement.

This is just a snapshot of a University that makes a difference, every day.

When your work matters—like our work matters—it's a pleasure and a privilege to do it. To everyone here who has a piece of our work—who advances our mission, supports our scholarship, partners with us in building a better world—I can't begin to tell you how grateful I am.

UMBF Distinguished Service Award

We have a new award this year that I'd like to mention.

I spoke at this gala last year about building a culture of philanthropy at UMB. I said there's no doubt this University will become ever-more reliant on private support to sustain breakthrough discoveries, world-class education, and transformational service.

And so this year, the UMB Foundation initiated a new award—its Distinguished Service Award—which recognizes those whose incredible generosity is a guiding light for others to follow. Our inaugural recipients are lights, indeed.

First is Carolyn Frenkil, a member of the UMB Foundation Board of Trustees and the School of Medicine's Board of Visitors. Her passion for the school and for the University runs very, very deep. Ms. Frenkil and her late husband, Dr. James Frenkil, began supporting the School of Medicine decades ago.

Most recently, Ms. Frenkil has helped fund the school's Executive Health Program, the Frenkil-Passen Historical Scholar in Residence, a course in the cutting-edge field of pharmacogenomics, and collaborative research in the medical school's Program on Aging, Trauma, and Emergency Care.

Ms. Frenkil, would you please stand?

Our second recipient is actually many recipients—the School of Nursing's BSN graduating class of 1966.

As the class was approaching its 45th anniversary, its leaders spearheaded an effort to endow a scholarship. The initial goal was the \$25,000 endowment minimum. They met it—the first class in school history to do so.

Then they realized they could likely reach \$50,000 by their 50th reunion next year. With the help of the UMB Foundation Scholarship Matching Program—and a campaign of letters, emails, and phone calls to alumni across the country—the Class of '66 made its second goal, too—\$50,000.

And then when a member of the class was diagnosed with cancer, her classmates did an incomparably loving thing: They marked each of her treatments with a gift to the endowment.

This a culture of philanthropy. This is life-changing, life-saving generosity.

So many of you who are here tonight we count among our most generous donors. But I ask you to be our ambassadors as well.

You give because you know our work matters; you've met those who've been touched by it, healed by it, strengthened by it. Please help us spread the good news of UMB. Please help us build a culture of philanthropy that supports our elemental purpose: to improve the human condition and serve the public good.

And please help us educate the students whose dream it is to do exactly that.

Student Scholarships

During her undergraduate career at Wake Forest University, Leah Beachley developed an interest in social justice. Fluent in Spanish, she spent a semester in Iquitos, Peru, where she conducted research for her honors thesis in anthropology. It was there that Leah volunteered with Lazos de Vida, a grassroots organization that focuses on advocacy for people with HIV and on preventive education.

Following graduation, Leah served in Honduras for three years as an elementary school teacher. Her experience working with students and families in disadvantaged communities in Latin America made Leah want to do the very same thing back home. And that's what brought Leah to our School of Social Work.

But the thing that's made her graduate education possible is the generous support of patrons. Leah is the recipient of the Greif Family Scholarship and the Betty and Leonard Golombek Scholarship, which supports students doing field internships through the Social Work Community Outreach Service.

Leah's placement is at Augusta Fells Savage Institute of Visual Arts in Harlem Park. The high school struggles with the same challenges facing many Baltimore City schools, but according to Leah, it also has some of the most passionate, kind, and resilient students she's ever met.

Leah says her scholarship motivates her not only to work hard at Augusta Fells Savage, but to "pay forward" the generosity of spirit she's been shown by making the most of her education and serving others to the best of her ability.

Would Leah Beachley and Betty and Leonard Golombek please stand?

Mustafa Alrubaiee is enrolled in the School of Nursing. And I can't do any better than he's already done in describing his career ambitions.

This is how he begins a letter to his benefactor: "My desire to pursue both a career and a life as a Clinical Nurse Leader has its origins in the dusty northern sands of my Iraqi homeland." I'd read any book that started that way.

As a first-generation immigrant, Mustafa says he carried with him from Iraq the desire to help people. Being accepted into the School of Nursing was a dream come true for him.

He says: "Every day I wake up and drive to school ... I feel this sense of pride and happiness knowing that I will change not only my life but the lives of the people around me."

But this dream doesn't come without cost.

Daily living and school expenses had Mustafa getting by paycheck to paycheck. And those paychecks were coming from FIVE different part-time jobs—a researcher at the Howard University Medical School, a faculty member at the College of International Security Affairs, a researcher for the American Physiology Society, a bus driver, and a bouncer.

The Charlene M. Passmore Scholarship was, in Mustafa's words, an answer to his prayers. The scholarship alleviated his financial burden, and helped him buy books and pay rent. Most importantly, it gave him a chance to focus on his nursing studies, instead of the five jobs that were financing it.

Mustafa says he's learning a lot about what it means to be a nurse, and he hopes the scholarship he's received helps others achieve the privilege of becoming one.

Would Mustafa Alrubaiee please stand?

We have quite a few students with us tonight. They're here as guests of the UMB Foundation and our sponsors. Many of their stories are remarkably similar to the ones I've just told you. So I hope you've talked with them about their dreams, their plans after school, what they've gained through this UMB experience, and what the generosity of others means to them.

Could all the students with us please stand?

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To everyone here who's making a difference in their disciplines and their communities; who's harnessing the power of discovery and innovation; who's pushing the boundaries of what we believe—and what we believe is possible—I offer you my most heartfelt thanks.

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