



University of Maryland University College

Office of the President

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Forum: 2010 Scholarship Appreciation Dinner

Speech: Remarks

Title: Scholarship Appreciation Dinner

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Thank you for sharing your stories, Arfa, Gary and Betty and welcome to all of you here tonight.

Every year, thousands of working men and women...just like Arfa and Gary...find their way to UMUC...for any one of a number of reasons.

To earn a degree or update a credential. To get ahead in the job or change careers altogether. To learn something new or pursue an ongoing interest.

And as you have heard, these remarkable students come from all walks of life and many cultural traditions...often juggling the demands of school with the responsibilities of work and family life. Still, they persevere. Online and in class...at night and during the day...one course at a time to as many as six in a semester. Through military deployments, job moves, and college transfers. Because they know that higher education is the passport to professional advancement...and the gateway to personal fulfillment.

Needless to say, these incredibly devoted scholars are this university's single focus and the one constant barometer of its success. And they continue to shape our mission with their lofty aspirations...their unique perspectives...and their tremendous energy.

Unfortunately, however, in pursuing their educational goals, far too many of our students have a hard time making ends meet...as they struggle to balance tuition expenses with grocery bills and mortgage payments...often accumulating substantial student loan debt along the way.

And because most of them make decent wages and have at least some assets...or cannot handle more than a couple of classes at a time...they are often ineligible for federally funded Pell Grants and federally sponsored tax credit programs.

So they are looking for scholarships that help defray the cost of higher education...while at the same time serving as tangible recognition of their hard work and academic talent.

As everyone here tonight has learned, there is no better investment than the gift of higher education...because the return is nothing short of spectacular. Thanks to your amazing generosity, 4,213 UMUC students received that gift last year...in scholarships totaling some seven million dollars.

Yet as impressive as these numbers are, there are at least 12,000 equally deserving students, who are still struggling to cover the costs of their education...simply because there are not enough scholarship awards to go around.

So to address their unmet needs, UMUC launched a 26 million dollar campaign...appropriately entitled Building a Legacy of Educational Opportunities...and made scholarship assistance its top fundraising priority.

And although we have already made tremendous strides toward our goal...especially now that we have received a 1.2 million dollar grant from the Kresge Foundation...we still have a little more than 2.5 million dollars to go before the campaign officially ends in eight months.

Of course, there's no time like the present to consider a meaningful gift if you haven't already done so. Because in the end...it's not about the dollars...it's about the thousands of talented students who will benefit from them.

Students like Arfa and Gary...who can now savor the academic journey...rather than worry about how to pay for it. And who will undoubtedly use what they have learned to make a difference in their communities...their country...and their world.

If...as some very wise person once said..."the best people in the world are the ones that can give without remembering and receive without forgetting"...then UMUC is truly privileged to count the very, very best of them among its vast circle of students and alumni; faculty, staff, and friends.

And before we end the program tonight, I would very much like to recognize two of these individuals...Don and Kim Orkand...who hold a particularly special place in our hearts at UMUC.

For those of you who know Kim and Don...you also know that there is no end to their personal commitment when it comes to this university and its students. Indeed, they have gone above and beyond the call for many years now...doing so

much for so many....which is why the name Orkand is synonymous with philanthropic generosity here at UMUC.

We were delighted to welcome them into our university community when Don first joined the Board of Visitors in 2001. Shortly after that, they endowed the Orkand Chair for UMUC's then newly established Doctor of Management program. But their generosity didn't stop there....because they also launched the Orkand Endowed Scholarship...which provides much-needed financial support to hardworking undergraduate students....along with the Orkand Family Military Scholarship...which covers textbook costs for military service members and tuition assistance for their spouses.

Moreover, UMUC has reaped the many benefits of Don's remarkable leadership, as the Chair of its Board of Visitors. And when he steps down from that position in the coming months...we will greatly miss his wise direction and...of course...his wonderful candor.

So in honor of the Orkands and their many, many contributions to this great university...I would ask that two of their scholarship recipients join me on the stage for a special presentation...James Baker, who received an Orkand Undergraduate Studies Endowed Scholarship...and Bernice Griffin, who received an Orkand Family Military Scholarship.

And now, would the Orkands come up here as well.

Your exemplary leadership, enormous intellect, and profound spirit of service have challenged us to move in new and exciting directions over the years. Having given often and freely of your precious time and resources...you have both earned a prominent place in the UMUC history book. And there are simply no words to express how much your friendship and support has meant both to me and to this university.

So I would like to present you with a small token of our appreciation...the Presidential Circle Pin...in the hopes that you will always wear it proudly.

And now, I would like to thank the rest of our many extraordinary investors...for believing in the power of education. Indeed, as Theresa said earlier, your enduring support over the years has enabled this great university of ours to transform lives and create futures for thousands upon thousands of exceptionally gifted and determined students.

I hope you will enjoy the rest of your evening...because you have certainly earned it.

Thank you,

Susan C. Aldridge, Ph.D.

President

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