

Syracuse University

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on November 11, 2017

Location: Archbold Gymnasium

Remarks: Barnes Center at the Arch Donor Recognition Ceremony

*The Chancellor was introduced by Student Association Vice President,
Angie Pati*

Thank you Angie! This is a happy day.

Of all the buildings on this campus, Archbold Gymnasium's uses have evolved the most over the last century.

It opened on December 17, 1908. It has been the home of the athletic department, including legendary student-athletes and coaches. It has held locker rooms both for recreational swimming and for the football team. It had a tunnel leading into Archbold Stadium, which the football team used for quick entrances and exits. Over the years, it has had pools, dancehalls, bowling alleys, rifle ranges, a water filled tank for rowing practice. It has been the home to our ROTC corps and a million pickup basketball games. Hundreds of thousands of final examinations were given here, administered in the main gym.

For decades, students registered for classes in this building, lining up in their thousands each semester to pick up treasured cards that gave them entrance to the classes they wanted or needed. I have met many alumni who first met their spouses in those lines.

In 1947, this building was severely damaged by fire. It was rebuilt quickly in the form you see today. It has outlasted Archbold stadium next door, although the tunnel is still there, filled with rubble right up until it hits the wall of the Dome.

While the uses of the building have changed a lot since 1947, the building itself has changed very little, and boy does that show. This place is crowded almost all the time now. Yet, the galleries above the swimming pool and the basketball courts are still there, though almost never used. The HVAC system is, how can I put this diplomatically: truly historic. It is really, really hot in here six months of the year; and really, really, drafty the other six months. The gym floor is like an archeological site – you can see evidence on it of the layers of student activities over the last half century, and you trip over them too.

The building whose uses have continually evolved to serve students, has itself not evolved much since 1947.

And that is why today is such a happy day. This building is about to be renovated and expanded into a state of the art health and wellness hub at the center of the campus. For the last three years, through all the work on the design of our campus that has become our Campus Framework, we heard one message from students and alumni more frequently than any other: Fix the Arch. And now we are doing it.

We are doing it because of the leadership of our board of trustees, our chair Steve Barnes and his wife Deborah and their family. As Chair of the Board of Trustees, Steve has quietly and professionally inspired us to responsibly improve this university, always with an emphasis on what is best for our students. He and Debbie have long supported key initiatives at the University, including endowing the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans; creating the Barnes Professorship in Entrepreneurship; co-founding the Institute for Veterans and Military Families, and helping to start the Orange Value Fund.

Today, Steve and Debbie's generosity has enabled us to do what the University needs most right now, to the benefit of the health and wellness of every student.

Archbold Gymnasium was erected in 1908 because another Chair of our Board of Trustees, John Archbold, cared deeply about our students and their participation in athletics. Sports and health have both evolved, but the underlying care for our students is still here, and the Barnes family leads in manifesting it. How appropriate that the Barnes Center at the Arch will continue that tradition in best-in-class facilities, and will tie these the Barnes and Archbold names together far into our future.

Steve, Debbie, and all in the Barnes family: Syracuse University extends its deepest thanks.

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