

Syracuse University

SURFACE at Syracuse University

Chancellor's Office (2004 - 2013)

University Administration

1-7-2015

Cliff Ensley Athletic Center Dedication

Kent Syverud
Syracuse University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://surface.syr.edu/chancellor>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Syverud, Kent, "Cliff Ensley Athletic Center Dedication" (2015). *Chancellor's Office (2004 - 2013)*. 100.
<https://surface.syr.edu/chancellor/100>

This Speech (Text) is brought to you for free and open access by the University Administration at SURFACE at Syracuse University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Chancellor's Office (2004 - 2013) by an authorized administrator of SURFACE at Syracuse University. For more information, please contact surface@syr.edu.

Syracuse University

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on Wednesday, January 7, 2015

Location: Cliff Ensley Athletic Center

Remarks: Cliff Ensley Athletic Center Dedication

The Chancellor was introduced by Athletic Director, Daryl Gross

Thank you, Daryl. It is great to be here and to be part of this very special ceremony.

I would like to thank two groups of people:

- Those who worked to deliver this facility on budget and on time, including our Office of Campus Planning Design and Construction, led by Eric Beattie and project manager Steve Smith; and Pete Sala, senior associate director for facilities who insured that the facility would meet and exceed the needs of all athletics teams who will use this space; and
- All those folks who helped organize today's event, especially:
 - Renee Baumgartner, deputy athletics director and chief of staff
 - Susan Edson, associate athletics director and director of athletics communications
 - Morey Mossovitz, assistant athletic director for facility and event operations
 - David Wishart, executive director, athletics development
 - Joseph D Giansante, executive senior associate athletics director/chief communications officer and external affairs
 - Chuck Merrihew, interim vice president for institutional advancement and external affairs

Of course we would not be here today if not for the incredible generosity and stewardship of Cliff Ensley, and his wife, Susan. As part of that, I would like to tell you just a little bit about the man whose name will grace this indoor practice facility.

Cliff is a loyal Syracuse University alumnus and a long-time supporter of its athletics programs. During his time here as a student, he came to embody the ideals and values that we hold for each one of our student-athletes.

He came here as a walk-on for the football team and ended his playing career here as Athlete of the Year. A gifted player in multiple sports, he was the University's most recent, and likely last, three-sport letter winner—earning letters in football, wrestling, and lacrosse. He was an honorable All-America in football in 1968 and MVP and team captain of the 1969 lacrosse team.

He worked just as hard, and excelled, at academics, earning a bachelor's degree in economics and industrial engineering and a master's in business administration, all at Syracuse.

The same habits of hard work, determination, and drive to achieve that led to such success on the playing field and in the classroom served him equally well in the business world.

After working as a buyer for a major New York City department store, he launched his own business, Leisure Luggage, in 1978. The company has since grown into a \$50 million-plus enterprise with a brand presence in more than 12,000 retail locations.

Since easing back on his company commitments, he has looked to increase his involvement with his alma mater and its athletics program. That desire is what sparked his interest in making this naming gift. The couple's multimillion dollar gift to help fund this practice facility builds

on their legacy of philanthropy that also includes endowing the Orange Forever Memorial Program.

Going forward, the Cliff Ensley Athletic Center will help Syracuse University attract the best and brightest scholar-athletes in the country.

It will provide an incredible opportunity for those students to hone their skills and compete with success in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

And it will help inspire them to follow the example of a man whose determination to achieve his full potential in athletics, in academics, and in life, continues to drive opportunity for future generations of students.

Leading by example is the best way to lead, and generosity can be highly contagious. Cliff attended the groundbreaking for this facility and was inspired by the generous \$1 million gift of Dick and Jean Thompson, who named the field for Jean's father, John Phelan, an alumnus, former Syracuse football player, and military veteran.

Dick and Jean's leadership gift will continue to inspire others, like Cliff, to give in ways that advance student opportunity on and off the playing field. Special thanks to both of them for their generous support and service to the University.

I am so glad that Dick, who is also chairman of the University Board of Trustees, could be here today. It gives me great pleasure now to introduce him and invite him up here to say a few words of his own.

Remarks delivered by Richard Thompson, Chairman of Board of Trustees, followed by closing remarks from Chancellor Syverud.

This is indeed a great facility and it will bring great opportunity to so many of our athletic programs for years to come.

As we conclude this celebration I want to again thank Cliff, Dick and the alumni donors who have made this project possible and successful.

Finally, I also want to acknowledge and thank all of our student-athletes, the true reason we are here today, and the reason why so many have supported this new project.

It is our hope that this facility provides you new opportunities to excel both on and off the field, as you represent Syracuse so well as our scholar-athletes.

Thank you all for being here today.

#####