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3-5-2015

### Robin Toner Prize Ceremony

Kent Syverud  
*Syracuse University*

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#### Recommended Citation

Syverud, Kent, "Robin Toner Prize Ceremony" (2015). *Chancellor's Office (2004 - 2013)*. 104.  
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# Syracuse University

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud  
Delivered on Thursday, March 5, 2015  
Location: Washington, DC  
Remarks: Robin Toner Prize Ceremony

*The Chancellor was introduced by Dean of S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Lorraine Branham*

Good evening and welcome. It is such a pleasure for Ruth and me to be with you tonight as we celebrate the legacy of a renowned journalist and our alumna, Robin Toner.

I want to thank and recognize:

- Peter, Jacob and Nora Gosselin, and Trustee John Chapple, for their vision in establishing this award.
- Syracuse University's Newhouse School of Public Communications Dean, Lorraine Branham;
- Charlotte Grimes, administrator of the Robin Toner Program in Political Reporting;
- and staff from the Newhouse School for their work in putting together this wonderful evening.

One outcome of journalism is to provide people with the information to be free and self-governing. Robin Toner was known for her high-quality, fact-based, accessible journalism.

Robin launched a career that would become legendary using a strong foundation of skills and experience gained from her Syracuse education.

Robin was the first female national political correspondent at The New York Times, a job she relished and that was exceptionally suited to her.

She illuminated the electoral process, revealed the politics of policy and engaged the public in democracy. She made the intricate details of policies understandable, and enabled voters to make informed decisions in the voting booth.

Peter Gosselin (Robin's Husband) and John Chapple, a Syracuse Trustee and Robin's classmate, established the Toner Prize in 2009 to encourage that same kind of reporting.

In just five years, it became one of the most prestigious awards for political reporters. This year, there were a record 165 entries—ranging from the top national newspapers to small-market television news operations.

As we will see shortly, when the prize is awarded to this year's recipient, Robin's brand of journalism is thriving.

Tonight's celebration also serves to inspire our next generation of Robin Toners.

A select group of students from the Newhouse School and the Public Diplomacy Program in the Newhouse and Maxwell Schools are here with us tonight. Would you please stand and be recognized?

These students are preparing to make their mark on the world, in the same way that Robin Toner did.

Thank you.

We are honored to have with us tonight, Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Secretary Clinton has frequently made history during her long career in public service. She served as the 67th Secretary of State of the United States from January 21, 2009 until February 1, 2013, after nearly four decades as an advocate, attorney, First Lady, and Senator.

As First Lady, she advocated for health care reform and led successful bipartisan efforts to improve the adoption and foster care systems, reduce teen pregnancy, establish Early Head Start and provide health care to millions of children through the Children's Health Insurance Program.

She also traveled to more than 80 countries as a representative of the United States, winning respect as a champion of human rights, democracy, civil society, and opportunities for women and girls around the world.

In 2000, Secretary Clinton made history as the first, First Lady elected to the United States Senate. As a Senator from New York, she worked across party lines to expand economic opportunity and access to quality, affordable health care.

After September 11, 2001, she advocated for rebuilding New York and addressing the health needs of first responders who risked their lives at Ground Zero.

In 2007 and 2008, Secretary Clinton made a historic campaign for President, winning 18 million votes, and more primaries and delegates than any woman before her.

In her four years as Secretary of State, Secretary Clinton played a central role in restoring America's standing in the world and strengthening its global leadership.

As America's chief diplomat and President Obama's principal foreign policy adviser, Secretary Clinton spearheaded progress on many of our greatest national security challenges,

- from reasserting the United States as a Pacific power
- to imposing crippling sanctions on Iran and North Korea
- to responding to the challenges and opportunities of the Arab Awakening
- to negotiating a ceasefire in the Middle East.

She pushed the frontiers of human rights and demonstrated that giving women the opportunity to participate fully in society, is vital to our security, stability, and prosperity.

Today, through the Bill, Hillary & Chelsea Clinton Foundation, Secretary Clinton builds on the nonprofit work she began nearly four decades ago.

The Clinton Foundation works

- to improve global health,
- strengthen economies,
- promote health and wellness,
- and protect the environment by creating partnerships of great purpose among businesses, governments, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals to deliver sustainable solutions that empower people to live better lives.

In her work at the New York Times, Robin Toner covered much of Secretary Clinton's career, including her efforts while First Lady in the early 1990s to overhaul the nation's healthcare system.

It was over this issue that Robin and Peter met as competitors. Secretary Clinton wrote the couple a congratulatory message upon their marriage in 1996.

She wrote them again upon the birth of their children in 1997. Peter recalls that her note said, with the marriage and the twins' birth, "At least something good came from health care reform."

Secretary Clinton's Presidential campaign in 2007 and 2008 was among the last of Robin's reporting. She passed way in December 2008, shortly after the Presidential election.

It is my honor to introduce Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton.

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