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### WISE Symposium

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# Syracuse University

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on April 21, 2015

Location: Carrier Dome

Remarks: WISE Symposium

*The Chancellor was introduced by Dean of Whitman School of Management, Kenneth Kavajecz*

Thank you, Dean Kavajecz. I am very pleased to be here this morning to welcome you to Syracuse University and to the 13th Annual WISE Symposium. This is the first time this event has been held on the Syracuse campus, and I am proud to be a part of it.

The WISE Symposium was launched in 2003 by the Falcone Center for Entrepreneurship in Syracuse University's Whitman School of Management. Two-hundred and fifty people attended that year. Last year, attendance was over 950 and the #WISE2014 hashtag on Twitter reached 7.1 million followers.

Today, close to 1,000 people are here to learn, to network, and to be inspired to follow their dreams. That speaks to the tremendous value of what you are about to will experience.

I want to thank the people who have been integral in organizing this event, including:

- Lindsay Wickham, events and communications manager at the Falcone Center, who does all of the coordination of this event; and other members of the Falcone Center team:

- Terry Brown, executive director;
- Christine Cancro Sauve, grants administrator; and
- Susan Oot, administrative specialist.

The WISE Women's Business Center team:

- Joanne Lenweaver, director;
- Alexandra Waterbury, administrative specialist/client care specialist;
- Maria Wiklund, WISE business counselor; and
- Rosanne Olszewski roundtable facilitator.

And Dean Kenneth Kavajecz and the Whitman School of Management

I also want to thank the supporters of the WISE initiative:

- The WISE Board of Advisors;
- the sponsors;
- the speakers who are donating their time;
- the business counselors;
- and, all of you attending today, for your belief in and support of WISE.

I am pleased to tell you that entrepreneurship is alive and well in Syracuse and at Syracuse University. There are many things to be proud of here, and our role in entrepreneurship is one of them.

We have a top-ranked entrepreneurship educational program at the Whitman School and a burgeoning cross-campus student entrepreneurship initiative. This includes entrepreneurship components in most of the schools and colleges on campus.

The Syracuse University entrepreneurship program has always had substantial involvement within the local community. One example is the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities.

Other programs can be found at the South Side Innovation Center and the Student Sandbox, among others.

This symposium, hosted by the Falcone Center, is further testament that Syracuse University is committed to empowering the entire community through entrepreneurship.

Inside each one of you here today there is a story. It may not be written yet. It may still be in the idea phase. But it is there.

You have to dream. You have to believe. And you have to pursue. Here are some examples to inspire you:

Syracuse University senior Courtnee Futch's dream started with a batch of bacon-chocolate Rice Krispies treats. After advertising them on Facebook, she sold out in less than an hour. Her specialty bakery business, Thundercakes, was then born.

Shanti Das, a 1993 alumna of our Newhouse School, is an accomplished music industry and marketing executive and entrepreneur. While here, she immersed herself in all she could related to radio and the music industry. Her portfolio now includes being founder and CEO of Press Reset Entertainment, an entertainment concierge service.

Donna Curtin, owner of Grace Auto Body, has been a supporter and client of the WISE Women's Business Center for the past six years. She recently submitted a winning proposal to the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) for a feasibility study. She plans to demonstrate the effective use of ultraviolet paint technology to reduce environmental toxins and decrease production costs at a local auto body repair facility.

A family history of heart disease encouraged Tracie Long to develop new recipes for cookies that are both healthy and delicious. Her business, Avocadough Baked Goods, just won the regional SBA InnovateHer business competition. Tracie has participated in the EEE Consulting course at the Whitman School, where students work with a real company to offer recommendations on everything from financials to marketing.

Kathy O'Connell has used her experience of living with cerebral palsy to build a business, Radiant Abilities. The WISE Women's Business Center helped her fine-tune her business plan. She is an author and public speaker who helps others with disabilities embrace their challenges and opportunities.

And finally, I want to tell you about the woman who walked into the WISE Women's Business Center last Tuesday morning. She is a mother and has been employed full-time for years. However, she knows there is a story inside her that is waiting to be written. She teared up as she spoke of her desire to prove to her children that anything is possible. She intends to begin the journey to become an entrepreneur and be in charge of her own destiny.

What is your story, and how can we help you write it? Today, I encourage you to take advantage of the vast body of knowledge and expertise under this roof.

Listen. Learn. Network. Be inspired. Set goals. Believe in yourself. There are many people here—people who have been where you are now. They are ready to help you reach your goals.

I want to now introduce you to Maria Contreras-Sweet.

She became the 24th Administrator of the Small Business Administration and a member of President Obama's Cabinet on April 7, 2014.

Ms. Contreras-Sweet is a successful entrepreneur, business executive, and state cabinet official. Throughout her career in the public and private sectors, she has been a champion of diversity, access to capital, and equal opportunity.

Prior to arriving in Washington, she founded the first Latino-formed commercial bank in California in more than 35 years. As the bank's executive chairwoman, she focused on providing access to capital and counseling small- and mid-sized businesses in Los Angeles.

Ms. Contreras-Sweet was the first Latina to hold a state cabinet post in California, where she was Secretary of Business, Transportation, and Housing. In the private sector, she served as vice president and later equity partner for Westinghouse's 7-Up/RC Bottling Company.

She was a founding director of The California Endowment, a multi-billion dollar philanthropic health foundation. She was appointed by the United States Senate to serve on the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, working to break down barriers between women and the executive suite.

Born in Guadalajara, Mexico, Ms. Contreras-Sweet is a first-generation immigrant who came to America at age 5 with her mother and five siblings.

I am pleased to welcome to this symposium and to Syracuse University, Ms. Maria Contreras-Sweet.

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