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Chancellor's Remarks at the Announcement of the Athletic Director Designate, John Wildhack

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Syracuse University

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on July 12, 2016

Location: Manley Fieldhouse

Remarks: Chancellor's Remarks at the Announcement of the Athletic Director Designate, John Wildhack

The Chancellor was introduced by student-athlete and member of the women's Final Four basketball team, Brittney Sykes.

Thank you, Brittney. Good morning and thanks everybody for joining us as we celebrate the arrival of our next director of athletics - John Wildhack.

I first want to thank a lot of people who made today possible, including:

- All the staff in the Office of Special Events
- All of our student-athletes, coaches and staff, who have done so much for this University, especially in the last couple of years
- Dan French and Herm Frazier for stepping up during a time of transition and providing sound interim leadership, and particularly for doing 52 weeks of work in the last eight weeks
- I also want to acknowledge and thanks the whole team from Korn Ferry, including Jed Hughes and Kyle Bowlsly, who I believe are here with us today, who supported the University during this quick search. It was a quick search but it was a thorough and very careful one.
- The members of the search committee who worked in a swift and meticulous manner to identify the best candidate for the job, including:
 - Coach Dino Babers, Rick Burton and Brittney Sykes, from whom you just heard:
 - Kimberly Keenan-Kirkpatrick, deputy athletics director and senior women's administrator; and
 - And Robert Miron, University Trustee and Chair of the Board of Trustees' Athletics Committee

Today is an exciting day for Syracuse University. It comes on the heels of an incredibly successful year for Syracuse Athletics.

This past year alone, Syracuse Athletics:

- finished in 21st place in the 2015-16 Learfield Division I Directors' Cup, the best result in school history;
- Syracuse brought home two national titles and five conference titles;
- the men's and women's basketball teams made historic Final Four runs;
- and the men's soccer team appeared in the semi-finals of the College Cup.

Every day, our student-athletes, coaches, and staff represent Syracuse University with class, and with humility, dedication, and heart. They make us proud; they sure make me proud.

Today, I take great pride in introducing our new Director of Athletics. John Wildhack is a dedicated leader whose ability to motivate and inspire a team lifted the entire ESPN organization. He has been a central figure in that network's growth and success. ESPN is not simply a cable sports network: It represents the ideal of understanding a fast-evolving national landscape in athletics.

John and his colleagues did not only react and respond to change. They anticipated it. They embraced it. They made sure to get there first. In that way, they became international leaders.

John brings boundless energy, knowledge and intuition to the most critical position in Syracuse athletics. He also brings a wonderful element of humility and humanity. From our conversations, it is clear that he understands the difficulties and challenges faced by student-athletes. He wants their experience to be one in which they learn first. In which they grow. In which they become even better citizens and better human beings.

There were many excellent candidates for the AD position this summer. I believe we could not have made a finer choice.

I could speak today about the deals John brokered with the major intercollegiate conferences and professional sports leagues in the nation. I could speak about his intimate involvement with some of the greatest and most high-profile sporting events in the world.

And yet, I prefer to describe a different qualification, the one that will resonate across Central New York. I grew up in Irondequoit, outside of Rochester. I was shaped by what I can only describe as an Upstate ethic of hard work and loyalty to where you're from.

Not quite three years ago, I agreed to serve as Chancellor of Syracuse University. A major factor in my decision was the opportunity of returning to Upstate and particularly to Syracuse,

In speaking with John, I felt that same quality. He was raised in Buffalo. Like so many of us, he has lived out the communal and sometimes painful beauty of cheering for the Buffalo Bills.

He speaks of his undergraduate years at this university as some of the most pivotal and important of his life. He understands how devotion to Syracuse athletics is often an expression of love and allegiance toward the place where you were raised. To say his family bleeds orange would be an understatement. His father Robert, his sister Linda, his brother Henry and his nephews Rob and Sean are all Syracuse alumni. And his sister-in-law Teresa is currently a doctoral candidate here.

Any university in the nation would be fortunate to have John Wildhack as Athletic Director.

But this is the only one that can say John is coming home.

We welcome you, your wife Amy, your sons MJ, Tommy and James.

We look forward to seeing you bring your bold vision for Syracuse Athletics to life and we look forward to seeing you do it while wearing ORANGE! So please help me in introducing Syracuse University's Director of Athletics, John Wildhack.

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