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Dinner Reception for United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims

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Syracuse University

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on September 27, 2016

Location: Dineen Hall

Remarks: Dinner Reception for United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims

*The Chancellor was introduced by Charles DiNunzio, College of Law,
Class of '15*

Good evening. It is my pleasure to welcome you to Dineen Hall. The University is very proud of this space. It's the ideal environment for providing a 21st century legal education.

I want to thank all the people who worked so hard to make this historic evening come to be:

- Dean Craig M. Boise;
- Gregory Block, clerk of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims;
- Karolyn Marshall and Dawn Braquet, of the court staff;
- Theresa Coulter, an aide to Dean Boise, in the College of Law;
- Vikki Mossotti, of the Office of Clinical Legal Education in the College of Law;
- Yelena Duterte, director of the Veterans Legal Clinic in the College of Law, Tom Caruso;
- And the catering staff who prepared this fine meal.

Beyond all else, thanks to the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims for agreeing to hold an appellate hearing on this campus.

This is an important moment for Syracuse University. This court was signed into existence by President Ronald Reagan, in 1988. Before it came to be, a veteran whose benefit claim was denied by the Department of Veterans Affairs had no right to go to court to challenge that decision.

Think of it. These were men and women who had given so much for this nation. Often, they suffered physical or emotional wounds. The creation of this court fulfills a national promise implicit in the service of those veterans.

It is the same promise embraced by Syracuse University, more than 70 years ago.

Tonight, in the company of this prestigious Court, I think of William Pearson Tolley, seventh chancellor at Syracuse University. He was a visionary who held the office from 1942 until 1969.

When he became Chancellor, millions of young Americans were fighting in World War II. Even before they came home, he saw their potential. As president of the Association of American Colleges, he was involved in crafting the language of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944. It would become known as the GI Bill. It is no exaggeration to say it helped build the nation.

In 1944, Chancellor Tolley announced his "uniform admissions policy," which guaranteed admission for military personnel to Syracuse University upon their return. In 1946, this university admitted more than 9,000 veterans. It almost doubled the size of the student body.

It was the right thing to do. It was prophetic thinking.

Chancellor Tolley understood these men and women would return with leadership skills tested under extreme conditions. Certainly, their aspirations became a pillar of this university. Their core ethic lifted and shaped this place.

That promise lives on. This nation's military is involved in the longest ongoing warfare in American history. New generations of veterans are returning from combat. They have 21st century skills. They often carry 21st century wounds. Under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Michael Haynie - with the support of a dedicated staff - the commitment here is the same as it was under Chancellor Tolley.

This university aspires to be the greatest place of learning in this nation for veterans. This goal is one of the University's key pillars. The dream is happening. Just recently, the Entrepreneurship and Emerging Enterprises (EEE) Program in the Martin J. Whitman School of Management was ranked first in the nation for veterans by College Factual, a USA Today-affiliated website. The university is nearing construction of a new National

Veterans Resource Complex. It will be a beautiful centerpiece on campus - a one-of-a-kind facility. It will provide many layers of service for veterans and military families. The driving mission is the same as the mission of this Court of Appeals:

Veterans have given so much for this nation. They deserve to know someone will always guard their interests.

So to the judges and staff of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims: Welcome. Your presence here, in this beautiful College of Law, is evidence of another truth. The gifts and potential of veterans at Syracuse University are not limited to specific programs or specific schools. They overlap into the Whitman School of Management, or the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, or the College of Arts and Sciences. Certainly, they overlap with the study of the law. On the battlefield, young Americans risk everything to protect all this college represents.

Once they return, they can take part in bringing that ideal to life.

Tomorrow, for the first time in the history of Syracuse University, the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims will hold an appellate hearing on this campus.

Thank you.

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