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15th Annual Indigenous Graduation Reception

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Syracuse University

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Syracuse University

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on Saturday, May 5, 2018

Location: Skybarn

Remarks: 15th Annual Indigenous Graduation Reception

The Chancellor was introduced by Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Dr. James K. Duah-Agyeman

Good afternoon graduates, friends, family, faculty, staff, alumni and all those who are here to celebrate these 23 amazing graduates of Syracuse University.

My remarks today are for the family and friends of the graduates who have come here today.

I hope you are feeling pride and great joy today in what these students have achieved at Syracuse University. I know I am. But as a parent of three boys, I can tell you I suspect that you are also feeling a bit of wonder today.

You think of wonder when you are out in the wild at night and the moon sets and the stars come out in all their glory. It is then you are driven to remember and give thanks in the words that come before all others, the words Dr. Abrams started us with today.

You think of wonder when you see a child – your child – born or arrive in your arms. I am certain there are parents and family here today – however your family is constituted – there are parents and family here today who vividly remember the moment of arrival of a baby who is now graduating today. Parents and family who still remember the wonder of a child's arrival, and all the hope and responsibility that came with that moment of wonder.

I remember that wonder with each of our sons, and like my wife Ruth, who has stood with me for 36 years now, I remember as well moments when that wonder gave way to the challenges of raising a kid in today's complicated world. I remember all the times each of my sons aged us.

But what I want to tell the parents and family today is this – there is no wonder that compares to the wonder I felt when one of my kids accomplished something hard that I knew I could not do. To look on as you see that kid who arrived in wonder go on to do wonderful things beyond my own ken – that is a wonder that lasts beyond the sunrise and beyond all the years of raising kids.

Well. Parents and family, that wonder is yours today. That fragile child you remember is graduating from a great university, with a unique expertise and with inspiring ability and values. I thank you on behalf of everyone at our University for helping to make this possible.

We are proud that at this University there are today 136 students who identify as Native American, plus others from indigenous peoples around the world. We have been working hard, under multiple chancellors, to respect and enable indigenous peoples at this University. We still have work to do.

But I am particularly grateful today to know that we are permitted to fly the flag of the Haudenosaunee alongside the American flag and our orange banner on this campus. And I am particularly grateful that 57 Haudenosaunee promise students now study on this campus – this campus which stands on the ancestral lands of the Onondaga nation.

Of course, we have students and alumni from many nations and many native peoples. For our new alumni who we celebrate today, I wish for each you many blessings in the world. I wish that you will stay connected to your University and all that is orange. I wish that your

lives may be blessed with the wonders you have bestowed today on your families and on all of us at Syracuse University.

Thank you.

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