

Syracuse University

SURFACE at Syracuse University

Chancellor's Office (2004 - 2013)

University Administration

4-25-2019

Elizabeth Liddy, Dean, iSchool, Retirement Reception

Kent Syverud
Syracuse University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://surface.syr.edu/chancellor>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Syverud, Kent, "Elizabeth Liddy, Dean, iSchool, Retirement Reception" (2019). *Chancellor's Office (2004 - 2013)*. 209.

<https://surface.syr.edu/chancellor/209>

This Speech (Text) is brought to you for free and open access by the University Administration at SURFACE at Syracuse University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Chancellor's Office (2004 - 2013) by an authorized administrator of SURFACE at Syracuse University. For more information, please contact surface@syr.edu.

Syracuse University

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on Thursday, April 25, 2019

Location: Goldstein Alumni and Faculty Center

Remarks: Elizabeth Liddy, Dean, iSchool, Retirement Reception

*The Chancellor was introduced by Vice Chancellor and Provost,
Dr. Michele Wheatly*

Good evening. I start by saying: I love the iSchool. All you have to do is walk through the iSchool or talk to almost anyone associated with it, and you should know why. The school has a special vibe unlike any school I have experienced anywhere else: it is an innovative place; it is an accepting place; it is that amazing exception in academia where the first response to a new idea is not “let’s appoint a committee” but rather “we can try that”. For these reasons I would love the iSchool even if it were not positioned at the key crossroads for the most important transformations facing our world, including in data science, in analytics, and in the nuanced and ethical use of information.

So how did this beloved school develop this special vibe? How did it position itself so well to be at the key crossroads? Here’s a huge part of the answer:

This photograph was taken in November, 1986, when Elizabeth Liddy was a doctoral student in Information Transfer at Syracuse University and an applicant for an assistant professor position at the iSchool. This passport photo is from Liz’s job application, which I am holding. This is Liz Liddy as a graduate student looking into the future. This is Liz not knowing that she is about to lead at Syracuse for the next 33 years. Not knowing that she is going to found her own company and become an entrepreneur. This is Liz not knowing that Dean Donald Marchand and

Dean Raymond von Dran and their colleagues are going to preside over Liz getting tenured and Liz becoming a Trustee endowed professor. Not knowing that she will be publishing scores of research papers and defining her discipline – and leading its organizations. This is Liz Liddy before she became a transforming dean of the iSchool and, for more than a year, the chief academic officer of Syracuse University.

At the time of this picture, in 1986, Liz Liddy is the mother of three teenagers, two of whom are here with us today. She has excelled already as a graduate student. She has raised a family and worked hard as a librarian, at Westhill High School and Onondaga Community College. She has already been an assistant professor at OCC as well.

Here is my question to each person present today. Back in 1986, would you have bet on Liz Liddy going on to achieve the miracles she achieved at Syracuse. In hindsight, looking at Liz in this picture, I sure think we would have done so. To me, the amazing thing about this picture is that it looks exactly like the essence of Liz Liddy today and all through her life. She is looking right at you like you and you alone are the most important thing in the world to her. Despite all the knowledge and ideas and obligations in that head, she is seeing you, and she is believing new things can get done. And even in this passport photo, there it is – the Liz Liddy smile that draws you in and says you are welcome to be part of this.

Liz, I know better than many that the road to all you have accomplished – in academia, in business and entrepreneurship, and in personal life – has had real challenges. There were times when you were tested. There were times when most of us would have flagged, losing faith in ourselves and the things and places we loved. But, and I say this as I am in genuine awe, you cheerfully and effectively carried on, along the way making this University a better place. And you made your beloved iSchool, in my humble opinion, the best in the world. I thank you for that. And I thank all your many enablers in this mission who came for you today. Liz, you

have a remarkable ability to inspire others to follow and join your wonderful culture of collaboration and faith in trying things, in accomplishing new things. May that culture be your greatest legacy.

God bless you, Dean Liz Liddy.

####