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Alumni Awards Celebration

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Syracuse University

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on September 13, 2019

Location: OnCenter

Remarks: Alumni Awards Celebration

The Chancellor was introduced by Don McPherson '87

Thank you, Don. And thank you, ladies and gentleman, for being a part of this special night. Your University is celebrating its 150th birthday year, and the amazing history of fearless firsts. One of them is this gentleman who just introduced me. Gentleman is not a title here. It is a concise and precise description. Don is a previous recipient of the Arents Award. He was honored for his service to Syracuse University and his pioneering work to use the appeal of sports to address complex social issues. I am so grateful he has been on campus promoting his new book, "You Throw Like a Girl: The Blind Spot of Masculinity." The book explores themes of masculinity in gender-based violence prevention. It is an honor to share the stage with Don McPherson.

Our honorees tonight attended Syracuse University in different generations. They come from different backgrounds. They have varied professions. And yet they have one thing in common: they are people who have thought independently, and been true pioneers. Each has followed his or her hearts, and has blazed a unique path to success. Each of them, in my opinion, is a "fearless first."

Dr. Alicia Carroll was a first-generation college student who has become the only female plastic and reconstructive eye surgeon exclusively practicing her sub-specialty in North Carolina.

Mary Cotter began her career in cable industry in 1978, when the infrastructure of cable television was just being built. She was named one of Cable World Magazine's Most Powerful Women in Cable, twice.

As a seven-year-old, Sean McDonough dreamed of being the voice of the Boston Red Sox. Like so many of you, he came to Syracuse to follow his dream. He broadcasted Red Sox Games for 16 years. And he became the youngest man in history to broadcast the World Series.

Ron Goldfarb started college at 16 and in 1956 became the youngest person ever admitted to the New York Bar. Joanne Goldfarb wanted to be an architect, and persisted even after being rejected by colleges that told her Architectural study would be wasted on a woman. She became an award-winning architect.

Joshua Aviv is revolutionizing how electric vehicle owners take long trips. His amazing company won a \$1 million startup competition.

Kevin Belbey is a former head manager of the Syracuse men's basketball team. Kevin built on that experience to become general manager of Boenheim's Army, a club team of former Syracuse basketball Players.

Our first ever Military and Veteran award recipient, Don Waful fought in WWII, was captured, and then escaped an Axis Prisoner of War Camp. He was President of the Syracuse Chiefs (now Mets) for 35 years. Don passed away yesterday at the age of 103. He was my friend. I offer my deepest condolences to his family and friends. Don very much wanted to be here to receive this award and to cheer on the football team at tomorrow's game against Clemson.

All of these leaders have manifested courage, imagination and tenacity. We hope to instill these traits in every student who attends this institution. As we honor these distinctive individuals and their “fearless firsts”, I challenge the next generation of the Orange family to be inspired by their example. And like them, I ask you always to go Orange.

Thank you.

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