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Remembrance Scholar Convocation

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Syracuse University

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on October 25, 2019

Location: Hendricks Chapel

Remarks: Remembrance Scholar Convocation

The Chancellor was introduced by Linda Rougeau Euto, Associate Director for Research and Evaluation, Institute for Veterans and Military Families

Thank you, Linda.

On behalf of all of us at Syracuse University, I welcome all of our guests here today, and all of you who join us to remember.

This year is Syracuse University's sesquicentennial, the 150th anniversary of our founding. We are spending this year looking back on the events that have shaped our institution since 1870. This includes times we were at our best and times where we were humbled. Like our Remembrance and Lockerbie scholars, our university is examining ways we can learn from our collective past. That perspective informs how we can be agents of positive change in the future.

This week, our Remembrance and Lockerbie scholars each acted forward for positive change by completing 35 hours of community service. I hope we all follow their example. Today also marks the beginning of our University's 150 days of service, commemorating our 150th anniversary. I encourage us all to participate.

Back in December 1988, the 259 people who boarded Pan Am 103 were unique individuals, as were 11 townspeople in Lockerbie. As you have been reminded again today, our 35 students on the plane included young people in

student government, in ROTC, in art and music, on athletic teams. They included social workers, actors, teachers, future doctors, lawyers, journalists, writers, poets, scientists, and linguists. They were individuals. Back in 1988, in a few moments, a cruel act of terror bundled them together as victims, ended their lives. And it threatened to make them remembered, if at all, solely for how they died.

I thank God that is **not** what has happened. After the Pan Am 103 tragedy, after the shock and the funerals and the memorials, some people came together in Syracuse to make sure that would not happen. These volunteers were not the high and mighty. They included a librarian, a photographer, a writer, a staff member, and many others. They and their successors invented a way to remember each individual for the good within him or her. They got support from the University and donors and family members and the Lockerbie and Scotland community for the Remembrance program. And now, for more than 30 years, good has come from remembering each of our students as individuals.

And so today, in 2019, the weekly Cusecast, watched by thousands of parents, students, and friends, is anchored by Remembrance Scholar Gabrielle Caraciciolo, who represents and channels by name the spirit of Mark Lawrence Tobin in her broadcast. There are at least 34 other unique such examples of remembering across this campus, running all of this year, covering every student on that plane, as well as all the passengers and folks on the ground.

And so today, in 2019, each student on that plane has his or her own alumni association of more than 30 graduates of Syracuse who have been paying forward and channeling their student's spirit and dreams. I doubt there is a single Remembrance Scholar alumnus who does not think, at least once a week, of the student they represent. I think there is not a single Remembrance Scholar alumnus who does not feel that he or she has been given much

through a student on that plane, and now and always has to live up to the legacy of the student they remember.

And so today, in 2019, our University and our community's ties to Lockerbie and to Scotland are strong and growing, as reflected in our great privilege of hosting Brodi Chambers and Rowan Chisholm, of Lockerbie Academy, at our University this year. Our ties are growing and strong as more of our students and faculty and staff visit Lockerbie and come to know what I believe are among the best and most decent people on the planet.

In the years since 1988, we in this world have at times been numbed by increasing acts of senseless hate and violence and terror. These acts have occurred in schools and churches, in workplaces and synagogues, in mosques and grocery stores and on airplanes. We each have a choice of how to respond. We can turn our eyes away from what, in our human weakness, we cannot bear to look upon. Or we can learn from our Remembrance Scholars and Lockerbie Scholars and alumni, who have now, for more than 30 years, unflinchingly faced terror and responded by affirming the good and the decent and the hopeful in each of us and in each person on that plane and on the ground in Lockerbie.

I know that this year's Remembrance Scholars will not turn their eyes away. I know each of you will affirm, your whole life, the good and decent and the hopeful. I know this because you represent the very best of this amazing 150-year-old University. Congratulations on this honor and this responsibility.

Thank you.

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