

# COLLEGE *of* CHARLESTON

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## OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

President's Remarks  
*BOUNDLESS* Milestone Announcement  
Alumni Hall, Randolph Hall  
11:30 a.m., Friday, Feb. 12, 2016  
Delivered By Glenn F. McConnell '69

I want to thank you all for taking time out of your busy schedules to be here with us this morning.

Today is an extraordinary day in our institution's history, and I am pleased to share with you a special announcement regarding our *BOUNDLESS* campaign.

Joining me on stage are alumnus Steve Swanson (Class of 1989), who is the co-chair of the *BOUNDLESS* comprehensive campaign, and alumna Ann Looper Pryor (Class of 1983), who is our vice president of alumni affairs.

It is fitting in talking about our *BOUNDLESS* campaign that we all come together in Alumni Hall, at the very heart of campus. This space is a shrine to generosity. Just look on the walls around you.

Etched in stone are the names of men and women who have given to the College of Charleston, helping to make our institution the special place it is today. Each plaque tells a story of a different kind of philanthropist. Whether it was in the 19th century or the 21st century, they all saw the power of the College of Charleston experience and our unique place in the higher education landscape.

Like many of you, these generous men and women knew that the College is not like other universities. Our institution connects with a certain kind of personality, one that sees the world a little differently. A personality that is driven, passionate, imaginative, smart and ambitious. That is the College of Charleston I knew as a student and that is the College of Charleston I see here today.

It's that legacy of inspired learning that connects all of us. And, I am happy to say, that many, many others share that same belief and optimism in our beloved College of Charleston. How do I know this? Well, the numbers from our BOUNDLESS campaign speak for themselves. With that in mind, I am thrilled to announce that this winter, the College reached and surpassed our campaign goal of 125-million dollars.

It's an amazing achievement and an important milestone. Since the beginning of this effort in October 2009, we have raised more than 127-million dollars. BOUNDLESS represents the College's largest and most successful philanthropic and engagement campaign in our institution's 246-year history.

So, what does that big number really mean? That figure represents the philanthropic support of both gifts and pledges from many investors to fuel the margin of excellence that makes the College so distinctive. Of the nearly 23,000 investors that have helped us reach this goal, their impact is realized in areas such as our academic and athletics programs, scholarships, faculty positions, capital projects and student opportunities.

Our donors understand the value of a College of Charleston education and have expressed their vote of confidence through their giving. Campaigns like ours are about strengthening both our present needs while also laying a strong foundation for the future.

Already, through the BOUNDLESS campaign, we have been able to create and award more scholarships than ever. Since 2009, we have grown student aid and scholarship support from the College of Charleston Foundation by more than 70 percent - thus making the dream of a College of Charleston education a reality for many more of our students.

At the same time, our endowment has grown more than 60 percent, which means the College will benefit from the successes of this campaign for many years to come.

This campaign is also a teaching tool, of sorts. Through BOUNDLESS, we have been able to talk to a wider circle and share our unique story. And, in those many conversations – around the state, up and down the East Coast, across the country and spanning the globe, we have found a willing and eager audience.

In learning more about the College or re-engaging with their alma mater, these generous donors have become investors in our unique brand of education: our student-focused, holistic liberal arts and sciences and business approach to understanding and bettering the world.

I would like to take a moment and highlight a few of these benefactors – just some of the people and organizations who helped put us over the 125-million dollar mark. They represent faculty and staff, students, alumni, corporations, foundations, parents and friends. The thread that connects all of these donors is their faith and confidence in a College of Charleston experience.

Let me begin with Shekinah Patterson, a senior sociology major from Johns Island, South Carolina, who dreams of being an educator. Shekinah is a member of the student group Committed to Charleston, which is made up of some of the College's most dedicated student leaders. Like Shekinah, they understand the power of philanthropy and its role in making the College great.

And CofC parents certainly understand how great the College is. They see firsthand how the College transforms their children's lives. Take for example, Laura Ricciardelli and Dave Watt, of Annapolis, Md., who are the parents of Hanna Watt, Class of 2011. Laura and Dave saw immediately the impact the College had on their daughter and they, too, became involved on campus, serving as national chairs of the Parent Advisory Council. For several years, they have supported different areas of campus and have even endowed their own family scholarship.

But you don't have to have a child at the College to connect to our institution. Many people discover an area on campus that speaks to them personally. For example, Belk and Ann Bacot Daughtride are dear friends of the College and longtime supporters. They love athletics, and they especially love the academics we offer. Through the BOUNDLESS campaign, Belk and Ann Bacot have started an excellence fund in order to help high-achieving faculty members.

I'm proud to say that many corporations and foundations find common ground and shared interests in our varied programming. The Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation is a public foundation in Atlanta that has partnered with the College since 1987 to provide annual scholarships for female students with financial need.

And the Boeing Company has contributed to the College since 2011. Through Boeing's generous support, the College's Farm-to-School Program is teaching South Carolina public schoolchildren and their families about healthier lifestyles. Boeing has also awarded scholarships to 21 of our students as well as provided mentors to our entrepreneur accelerator program ICAT.

But perhaps the one group that best understands the power of this place is our alumni. They studied here, they tested themselves here, they used this place as their launch pad into incredible careers. Let's learn about four of them now:

Al Eads (Class of 1982) is an executive vice president of Heritage Healthcare in Greenville, S.C. Al played basketball for the College and, like many, was the beneficiary of a scholarship. In true Cougar spirit, he is paying it back by endowing a scholarship for a student-athlete.

Chanele Jackson (Class of 1987) is the very personification of perseverance. As a single mother of three, she worked incredibly hard to make it through college. The scholarship she received as a student made all the difference - the difference between her being a college dropout or a college graduate. Today, Chanele is a corporate finance consultant with Wells Fargo in Charlotte, and she has established her own scholarship through a planned gift.

Neel Ellison (Class of 1993) is a business owner in Charlotte and is a member of the Live Oak Society. That means she is one of the most consistent donors to her alma mater. So, why does Neel give? Because she loves the College. It's where she made lifelong friends and lifelong connections.

But our alumni are not just undergraduates. Our graduate programs produce some of the finest examples of a College of Charleston education.

Like Martin Erbele, who earned his master's in public administration from the Graduate School in 2013. Today, Martin is a contract mitigation planner for FEMA in Atlanta. While Martin was in grad school here, he made a deep connection with our institution because he saw - no, he felt - how our faculty and their instruction are complete life changers.

And now, let's meet one of those life changers. Our faculty and staff are a vital part of this campaign - both in their gifts and their talents. It shows you the power of this place when the people who work here also give back. They are true believers and they lead by example.

Just as Andrew Lewis is doing. Professor Lewis came to the College in 1979. In that time, he has held many positions for the School of Education, Health, and Human Performance - faculty member, department chair, director, associate dean - name a title on campus, and Andrew has probably had it. But perhaps one of his proudest titles, one, too, that is most deserved, is philanthropist.

I hope you perhaps see yourself in one of these faces, one of these stories. They, like you, care deeply for this special institution. And by following their example, we, too, can be philanthropists, whether it is giving 5 dollars or 5 million dollars. As we have said from the beginning: every gift counts, every donor matters.

Now, I would like to personally acknowledge our campaign's co-chair for his tireless efforts. Steve Swanson's leadership in this campaign has been crucial to our success, and his unwavering support for the College energizes and inspires me and many others to want to do more. Steve, thank you for caring so much for this school and its students.

What you and your wife, Emily, have done for our institution – your consistent philanthropic commitment to scholarships and your extraordinary alumni leadership – will truly have an impact for generations to come.

And I also want to thank everyone at the College for their hard work. This campaign represents many years of planning and many hands to shape it and lift it up. We have succeeded in reaching and exceeding our campaign financial goal because of all of you.

But we are not done! Not even close. The 125-million dollars was simply one of the goals we had set for ourselves, and we need to continue this momentum and carry it all the way through to the campaign's end on June 30th and well beyond.

How do we do this? For one, I ask our alumni to proudly step forward and answer that inner calling to be a champion for the College. Currently, we have more than 9,400 alumni who have given to the BOUNDLESS campaign. Vice President of Alumni Affairs Ann Pryor and I would like to increase that number to 10,000 by the end of June.

As alumni, we have a responsibility to care for this institution, to ensure that it not only goes on, but that it goes forth stronger. The College is in our collective DNA. So, let's come together now to ensure that it is passed on to future generations of students.

This summer, when we wrap up this campaign, we'll be taking an alumni roll call, and I hope your name will be there. Because, I fervently believe, that as alumni, now is our time. Now is our time to show what the College means to us. Now is our time to ensure a healthy future for the institution we love. Now is our time to be leaders and to live up to our alma mater's appeal to be loyal sons and daughters.

This place is special. We all feel it; we all know it. This place transformed my life, just as it has for so many of you. It's not the pretty buildings, the pretty trees that did it – it is the incredible men and women who built this remarkable community – a community of scholars, a community of thinkers, a community of advocates, a community of friends.

Now is our time to come together. Right here, right now, we all have an opportunity - in our own way, no matter the size of the gift - to have a real impact and transform the future of this special community.

So, as I said earlier, there is so much for which to be proud, yet still much work to be done. But it is proper to recognize a milestone when you hit it so that you can build upon it. Again, thank you for your participation and all of your hard work in this campaign. Like those historic men and women memorialized around us in this room, we are adding our names to a remarkable legacy - one that ensures that our Cougar spirit remains forever boundless.

Thank you.