



Lil Abner Foundation Thanksgiving Bash

**Given by Kenneth A. Jessell
On November 12, 2022.**



These remarks were given at the Lil Abner Foundation Thanksgiving Bash by President Jessell on November 12, 2022.

Hello everyone! I am Ken Jessell, President of FIU. It is wonderful to be with you today, in the great city of Sweetwater and during this very special month of giving and gratefulness.

Sweetwater, FIU's neighbor to the north, is near and dear to so many Panthers – many of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni call Sweetwater home, and even some of them now work for the city.

There is one group of individuals at FIU, our Honors College students, who since 2009 have collaborated closely with Sweetwater for several initiatives, including internships, research projects, and volunteer opportunities. In fact, today, I am accompanied by 15 current FIU Honors College students, who are here to help out however they can to make sure today's event is a success.

As many of you know, the Lil Abner Foundation was founded by Raul Rodriguez, who has served for almost 12 years on the FIU Honors College Dean's Advisory Board and is among the most prolific donors and benefactors of the Honors College. Raul's vision to create a place for our elementary students to come after school to learn and play has made an incredible impact on the lives of so many families in this community. And his willingness to give our FIU students the chance to volunteer and make a difference is truly invaluable.

Today, I'd like to thank Raul for his vision and generosity, and for giving FIU the chance to be part of the beautiful work that the Lil Abner Foundation accomplishes every day.

I'd also like to thank city officials and staff for being so hospitable to our students.

At FIU, we treasure our partnership with Sweetwater and hope to continue our longstanding tradition of collaboration in the years to come.

Finally, to the residents of Sweetwater, I want to invite you to come to campus as often as you can. We are always ready to welcome you.

Happy Thanksgiving everyone!