



**Address at the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Torch Awards**

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg  
on April 1, 2017**



*This speech was presented to the FIU Alumni and guests of the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Torch Awards held at the JW Marriott Marquis Miami on March 19, 2016.*

What a touching reminder of one of the reasons we are all here tonight...our students! Did that video hit home for some of you? Maybe you were once in their shoes! You had the passion and drive to succeed and look! Today, you are here!

Now, you have the power to help first generation students achieve their dreams! All of us in this room are brought together by a shared sense of purpose. Despite what happens in this world, we know why we are here!

Every morning, we wake up to a world full of challenges – to new headlines, to new uncertainties. To on going exclusivity, uncivility and divisiveness. Rising anger and frustration. Things change so rapidly, it can be hard to keep track.

It can feel complicated and chaotic, and I know we all sense it...that these times are asking something of us. What can we do? How can we respond? What are our options?

Our Alumnus of the Year, Chad Moss, has a favorite motto: “This situation is temporary; you will overcome!” This is the spirit our entire FIU family possesses! A spirit of perseverance, of hope, and of responsibility! We choose to see each challenge as an opportunity, and as a motivation to keep dreaming and working toward something better, toward that next horizon!

We choose to keep caring. To keep doing what is right for our children, and our children’s children, and all of the generations we might never meet. To do what is right and what is good for the future of our community and our world.

This sort of impact starts with every day acts of responsibility. There is no better example of this than a few weeks ago. It was Spring Break and hundreds of students packed the sands of South Beach. As the sun set, the parties died down and the beachgoers went home, a mess was left behind. Aluminum cans and plastic bottles were scattered along the shore. Guess what our students did? Members of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity asked if they could stay into the night and clean up the debris on the beach! They had fun, and they did the right thing!

This story has resonated with many in our community. The Miami Beach police thanked our students on Twitter! The tweet has been liked more than 2,400 times, and retweeted more than 1,500 times! We are so proud of these students for being role models and showing that we care – that we step up and take responsibility for our community – 24/7, 365...even during Spring Break!

These students stand for the goodness that is our FIU! They reflect the spirit in this room – especially of you, our awardees, and your commitment to give back. This is who we are, this is what we do!

Please know this: our there, people are so thankful that our FIU exists! Whether we are cleaning up the beach or at a community event – like the MLK parade in Liberty City, North Miami Winternational Parade and the Gay Pride Parade on South Beach – or graduating thousands of students every semester, there is an overwhelming joy in people’s hearts because we are here. We bring tremendous value and happiness to our community.

Our FIU family is grateful for us, too! We are hope and opportunity. They wants to tell the world about the good work we’re doing, the satisfaction they take from making this a better place, and how great it is to work at the Finest Institution in the Universe.

Last year, we earned not one, but two workplace recognitions! We made *Forbes* “America’s Best Employers” list and were name the second best Florida employer after Publix! And, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* also recognized us as one of the nation’s “Great Colleges to Work For”!

Why are these accolades so important to us? Because they come from our FIU family! They happen because they believe in what we’re doing and are united in our mission and passion to help students! It’s this love of our FIU that drives us. With such a supportive community and FIU family, we feel empowered to do amazing things!

In the last year, we have continued to make considerable progress in important rankings. The College of Business’ undergraduate international business program ranked fifth in the *U.S. New & World Report’s* 2017 Best Colleges report! This is the highest ranking we’ve received so far! And, this is the fourth time in five years that the college has ranked within the Top 10 in international business! Our College of Business also rose nine spots on the University of Texas at Dallas’ Top 100 Business School Research Rankings for North America – one of the nation’s key indicators of top faculty research.

Our Model United Nations team ranks second in North America! This is our highest ranking yet! We even beat Harvard and Georgetown!

Our College of Law was recently recognized by the *Daily Business Review* for our graduate employment rate! We lead the state in the job placement with 82 percent employment! And, for the third time in a row, our College of Law graduates earned the top passage rate on the Florida bar exam! They earned 20 percentage points higher than the statewide average of all Florida bar exam takers!

Civil Engineering broke Top 100 – we are on the move, on the hunt! It's not just that we want to do this, it's that we have to do this!

Our students, our community, our employees, our great work and recognitions... they have all helped shaped us into who we are today. And then you, our alumni! We've transformed into the world-class institution that we are today because of *you*. We continue to help thousands in this community because of *you*. You've played a major role in building a better FIU!

In fact, one of our alumni who we're honoring tonight has helped us build our FIU...literally. If you've visited our Tamiami Campus in the past few years, you might have seen the beautiful Parkview Residence Hall – our newest student housing on campus. Guess who built it? This year's Alumnus of the Year, Chad Moss!

His family owned a company – also donated to FIU – to create the Built Environment Informatics Laboratory for the Construction Management program students! This has been a valuable resource! It has state-of-the-art virtual reality systems that give our students the skills they need! That's not all! His company also hires our students! About 55 employees are FIU alumni! Talk about giving back! Talk about impact!

And, like Chad, each one of you makes a difference for our FIU. You are torchbearers in more ways than one. You lead by example; you shine the light on the path forward.

Tonight, we celebrate you because you are part of our FIU family and all that you accomplish means so much to us – and also because, right now, the world needs people to step up, to take responsibility... to move the needle.

We might live in this world full of challenges, but remember it's also one filled with beauty, wonder and endless possibilities. With you behind us, supporting us, our FIU can be the force that brings more good, more joy, innovation, hope, opportunity and possibility into this world. That will get us to our next horizon.

Thank you and please enjoy your dinner!