



**Address at FIU's Employee Service and Recognition Awards**

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg  
on November 1, 2012**



*This speech was presented at FIU's Employee Service and Recognition awards on November 1, 2012.*

Thank you, Jaffus, for that wonderful introduction and thank you all for the warm welcome. It is great to be here today celebrating the spirit of excellence among our faculty and staff. Your hard work over the years has helped us educate thousands of engaged global citizens who have the skills to compete in today's global marketplace.

Your contribution is important, whether you are teaching our students, guiding them in research or community service, or engaged in any of the thousands of administrative and operational tasks that allow our university to be Worlds Ahead in student learning, innovation, and collaboration. Before we move forward with our recognition of the accomplishments of our faculty and staff it is important to take a moment to remember our beloved colleagues who have passed away since our last ceremony.

We will always remember their hard work on behalf of FIU students and the ways they touched our lives. They exemplify the spirit of excellence and they are forever part of the FIU family. Please join me in a moment of silence. Thank you.

Now, how did we become a Worlds Ahead institution? By turning the impossible into the inevitable ever since we opened our doors 40 years ago. But it all started a few years before that, on a hot summer day in 1969 when FIU's founding president, Chuck Perry drove an old state car out to an abandoned airport control tower. When he made it to that control tower, and took it all in, he realized this would one day, in fact, be a great university. Over the past 40 years, President Perry's vision has become a reality, and we honor him right here at FIU.

It is a reality thanks to you and your contributions, which have helped build the Worlds Ahead institution where we work today. Over the years, we have had to pull together as a family many times. I was reminded of this recently when we celebrated the inauguration of our new 12-fan Wall of Wind and marked twenty years since Hurricane Andrew devastated our community. For those of you marking 20 years or more of service with FIU, or any of you who have lived in South Florida for a long time, I know you remember August, 24, 1992. That's the day Hurricane Andrew hit South Florida, our home, resulting in a 25-mile-wide swath of destruction and devastating losses to our community.

But from this terrible catastrophe, the students, faculty and staff of FIU stepped up to help our neighbors. More than a quarter million pounds of relief supplies filled the Graham Center Ballroom. We rolled up our sleeves to organize supplies and seek out the members of our community who needed us the most, including homeless South Floridians. From one of the darkest pages of South Florida's history, FIU and our students, faculty, and staff emerged as a beacon of light. And today, 20 years later, we have taken what we learned from Andrew and channeled it into our research, teaching, and community engagement.

Today, we are at the forefront of researching and evaluating how to plan better for disasters and make a safer South Florida for all of our neighbors. Our new Wall of Wind has put FIU on the national map and that is a testament to all of our faculty and staff, which joined together, across departments, to make this a reality and to make sure we are telling the FIU story; the story of how we work together to build a brighter future for our students and our world. It is a tribute to the FIU spirit of excellence.

The spirit of excellence is in everything we do. We've had many occasions to celebrate major milestones this year. In addition to the Wall of Wind, we marked 10 years since the College of Law opened its doors. We marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary

of our first football season by welcoming back our founding team, Coach Don Strock and their families. We have just celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our College of Nursing and Health Sciences. And we also expect to soon be celebrating the granting of full accreditation to our Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education. What do all of these milestones have in common? YOU! Your hard work made all of them possible. Whether you've been here five years or 35 years, your dedication to FIU and commitment to excellence have made us the Worlds Ahead institution we are today. And now let's hear our faculty and staff, reflecting, [in their own words](#), on the spirit of excellence.

I would like to now recognize those of you who have exhibited the spirit of excellence throughout FIU's history. First, I would like to recognize a group of people who are a special part of the FIU family – our retirees. Some of our retirees left the university, but came back. Some of them still collaborate with our faculty, our students, and our community, by volunteering and contributing in other ways. So let me say a special “Thank you” on behalf of the entire FIU family to our retirees.

- Please stand and be recognized for your years of service and continued dedication. Please remain standing.
- If you are here celebrating your 35-year milestone, please stand and let us thank you for your years of service. Please remain standing.
- Will the faculty and staff celebrating 30 years with FIU please stand and be recognized? Please remain standing.
- Will the faculty and staff celebrating 25 years with FIU please stand and be recognized? Please remain standing.
- Will the faculty and staff celebrating 20 years with FIU please stand and be recognized? Please remain standing.
- Will the faculty and staff celebrating 15 years with FIU please stand and be recognized? Please remain standing.
- Will the faculty and staff celebrating 10 years with FIU please stand and be recognized? Please remain standing.
- Will the faculty and staff celebrating 5 years with FIU please stand and be recognized?

Ladies and gentlemen, let's give a big round of applause for these faculty and staff, as well as those who could not join us today to celebrate their role in making FIU Worlds Ahead. And to cap the historical portion of today's celebration, I'd like to give all

of you a sneak preview of a new history video that we created for our students. And now Jaffus will help us recognize many more faculty and staff who embody the spirit of excellence with the presentation of this year's Recognition Awards.

As a final treat, I would like to present you all with a group of students called "TIP Cage." They consist of members from Theta Chi, Iota Phi Theta, and Phi Mu. This group of students recently performed at the "Panthers' Got Talent" during our Homecoming Week, and won first place in the Gold Division. Ladies and gentlemen, let's give a round of applause to TIP CAGE!!!!