



**Address at the Funeral for Ted Spak**

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg  
on January 24, 2016**



*This speech was presented to the attendees of the Funeral for Ted Spak held at the Beth David Congregation on January 24, 2016.*

On behalf of our faculty, students and staff, we want to express our condolences to members of the family, loved ones and friends. We are deeply saddened by Ted's passing.

He has been a pillar of the FIU community for five decades. Always close, always finding ways to support, always encouraging, always there. Throughout this entire period, Ted had this unshakable belief in our institution.

Combined with his authenticity and decency as a human being, and his powerful sense of humor, Ted Spak was a powerhouse for us of energy, hope and purpose. I personally knew and worked with Ted during three of his five decades of connection to FIU.

Ted Spak found a way to give you courage, to enable you beyond the boundaries that you might have set – and to hold you accountable.

He was former part of a power quartet of good community people who adopted FIU. Who stepped out of their comfort zones to start, and built a public university that would become a major driver of hope and opportunity for people from all zip codes of this community. I am referring to Jimmy Orovitz, Al Morrison, David Perlman, and Ted. This is a pantheon of community gods who stepped up and helped to build our FIU – and now the last of these good people is gone.

And we feel their absence – we feel their absence. We have broad shoulders today because they empowered us to shoulder a heavy load – even if many in our community wanted exactly the opposite.

And there was Ted – through the decades, helping any way he could on the FIU Foundation – with Jimmy, with Al, with David, with Jordan Davidson, Kay Fahringer, Alvah, with Pat Frost, with Herb Wertheim, with Larry Kahn, with Adolfo Henriques, Joan Smith, Gerald Grant, Rosa Sugranes, and countless others.

Ted understood the linkage between words and deeds – we needed a public university – there was Ted. We needed to build a presidential home – there was Ted. We needed a football team – Ted was a founder. We needed a College of Law – and there was Ted.

Indeed, listen to one of Ted's FIU confidants for four decades -Vice President Paul Gallagher:

"We've always been an overachiever, we have always been an institution, that with all of our presidents, who have had big eyes, wanted to do everything, went after challenges, were willing to take risks, running into the wall and getting knocked down, running into it again and getting knocked down and again and again.... "

I worked directly with Paul—he was a mentor—I know how much Paul counted on Ted. You know why—because Ted was always there to comfort us, to pick us up—to uplift us and to keep us going. You did not want to fail, because you did not want to disappoint Ted.

And it was Ted who made the first significant gift to jump-start our Law School—even before it was created—that is just how much he believed in our FIU. So for us Ted's life is a monument to courage and purpose. Ted's work and his energy lives here at FIU.

No doubt—we now carry a void because of his physical absence—but no doubt as we step away from this pain, Ted's good work and his patience for us give us cause to celebrate and rejoice - and hopefully to inspire us to get more deeply involved in helping institutions such as FIU be a force for good in an era that desperately needs good things to propel us forward.

Always close, always finding ways to support, always encouraging, always there, Ted Spak. Thank you.