



Paul Gallagher--You Got This!

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg
on October 11, 2013**



This speech was presented to the FIU Community at the Celebration of Life for Dr. Paul D. Gallagher on October 11, 2013.

Dear Friends and Loved ones of Paul Gallagher and our FIU! We are here to comfort each other today. Accordingly, I have titled this missive:

Paul Gallagher--You Got This!

I have been here long enough to let you know that there have been few days sadder for us than to learn of Paul Gallagher's passing on July 30, 2013. You see, Paul's life was a metaphor for our university he helped to found this institution He started at our FIU January 1, 1971. He believed in this institution look around this place: *there is not much that Paul did not touch or helped to build. And there aren't many of us here whom he did not touch either directly or indirectly.*

He poured his heart and his soul into this institution through over four decades. His love for FIU was only surpassed by his love for his family, Jo, Jenny, Nic, his brothers, sisters, his nieces, and nephews. Paul meant so much to us; as a mentor, friend, adviser, humorist and a doer. Paul had tremendous reach. He was a very decent human being. He liked people. He connected with people. He found a way to empower people through his friendly smile, his trademark "Hello Sunshine," his infectious laugh, and his passion for the institution. Paul had a decency rooted in his upbringing; a large family from a poor area of Pennsylvania. Throughout his life he never, ever lost his humility; an indispensable element of leadership. So today we will not just mourn his passing. We will celebrate Paul's life! We will celebrate his *joie de vive* with a remarkable assembly of colleagues and friends. I want to thank you all for being here.

As you will hear, Paul is legendary in higher education annals because he occupied almost every single leadership role in the university through his four decades at FIU. Paul made significant contributions in each role. They would be too numerous to identify here. But, what is was his most important and lasting contribution to our FIU? The ethos that he inculcated of dreaming big, and of making these dreams happen if anyone embodied someone who turned the impossible into the inevitable it was Paul Gallagher! Let me quote from Paul himself in an interview that he gave some years ago:

Let me tell you something that has always been the same. We've always been an overachiever. We've 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... and eventually that wall softens. It took us 6 times to get a law school. After the 5th time, we said to President Maidique, "Give up, this isn't going to happen." He wouldn't give up. There's just that feeling that somehow we're always going to be able to do it.

Running into the wall and getting knocked down, running into it again and getting knocked down, and again, and again and eventually that wall softens. And there was Paul, along with Greg Wolfe and Steven Altman and Irene Manos, and Bob Fisher, and then with Mitch and Judith and Irene, and Mitch, Jim Mau, and Irene, and Cynthia Curry and then Mitch, me, Paul, Rosa Jones, Tom Breslin, Patricia Telles-Irvin getting knocked down, again and again on the stuff that we dreamed for our FIU. **Step back**, and you realize that Paul was fearless, But he ultimately made it look easy. And today, ladies and gentlemen, we are better for it!

Paul loved pop music and ballads. Take Jennifer Hudson, the popular musician, had more than a few knocks in her career. She too was a big dreamer; and... she got up to prosper. So listen to her lyrics:

I got this, every single breath another step on my road
I got this, I'm from the south side trying to get to my goal
I got this, ain't no stopping me,
Come on follow me if you feel the need
I got this, better believe I got this.....

We celebrate Paul, because we do believe that *he got this!* Jo, Jenny, Nick – Paul Got this, and that's why we are here! Lets make sure that Paul understands that we get it, I have asked Felicia to lead us in her version of "I Got This", originally by Jennifer Hudson. Will you all please stand and follow along with Felicia

The following was a letter published by FIU on July 31, 2013. The letter provides some insight on the impact Dr. Paul D. Gallagher had on FIU

We are profoundly saddened to share with you that one of FIU's legendary leaders — Paul D. Gallagher — passed away on July 30, 2013 at home in St. Augustine, Florida. He was a friend, a mentor and a colleague of four decades. His passing leaves a void in our hearts. He will be remembered as much for his many accomplishments as for his good-natured humor and kindness.

This news comes as a shock to all of us. At the age of 68, Paul succumbed to an aggressive cancer that was diagnosed earlier this month.

Paul served FIU with distinction from 1971 to 2007, when he “retired” to spend more time with his wife, Jo, who herself served on FIU's faculty in the College of Education. Although he stepped aside from FIU in 2007, he never really left the institution, and quickly returned to help President Emeritus Modesto A. Maidique develop the Center for Leadership, where he served as Faculty Director of the Miami-Dade County Schools' Principals Leadership Development Program. In this capacity, he took responsibility for curriculum and mentoring of school principals, many of whom were receiving their first formal training in leadership.

Paul came to FIU after studying psychology at Penn State University and earning a master's and Ph.D. in educational research from Florida State University. He dedicated his career to helping FIU grow and expand. In time, he served in just about every vice presidency in existence at FIU — an honor few in higher education can claim. One of his first posts at FIU was associate dean for education, then as associate vice president for academic affairs, and as acting provost. While in the Office of the Provost, he worked closely with the then new President Modesto A. Maidique to transition the university into a focused research-oriented institution. He then moved to vice president for the North Campus (Biscayne Bay), then vice president for student affairs, then vice president for advancement — where he led FIU's successful \$275 million fundraising campaign and helped to develop and expand the FIU Foundation, Inc.

In 1998 he assumed duties as the senior vice president for business and finance, followed by service as senior vice president and chief of staff in the Office of the President. Paul retired as Senior Vice President, Emeritus. During his years at FIU, Paul was routinely tapped to take on the new projects, move in a new direction, provide leadership to get us to the next level. And he always got it done with a big smile on his face. He leaves a trail of accomplishments, having been involved in every major initiative that moved the institution forward, beginning with the development of the Comprehensive University Presence (CUP) program that ushered in advanced and

doctoral degrees at FIU in the 1980s, to the initiation and development of two strategic plans that helped to shape FIU in the 1990s and early 2000s (Reaching for the Top, and the Millennium Strategic Plan). Almost every construction project at FIU has had Paul's distinct touch—including the Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Carlos Finlay Elementary School on the northwest corner of the Modesto A. Maidique Campus, which he helped to negotiate.

Paul was involved in the work that led to creation of both the College of Law and the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine. He was a major force in the addition of residence halls to the university and played a leading role in the steps culminating with the transition to Division I intercollegiate sports and the creation of the FIU football program. The creation of the football program was perhaps his proudest accomplishment.

In its relatively short history, few at FIU have done as much to develop the institution as Paul. His love for life and for FIU impacted most of our 200,000 alumni, faculty and staff. He had a friendly word for everyone who passed his way, his easy smile was infectious and his trademark "Hello sunshine" could light up a room.

He was well known for "vacation" days: he would announce days in advance that he would be "off" on a given day, only to show up on that day with a sheepish grin proudly declaring himself "on vacation" only to work the full day as any other. That was his way of demonstrating his love for the institution and his commitment to his fellow-staff professionals.

Paul's legacies are too many to enumerate and his absence will be felt by so many of us who still relied on him for perspective and advice. Our deepest condolences go out to his wife Jo, and his daughter Jennifer, both of whom he deeply loved and was fiercely and justifiably proud of. There is little consolation for this loss, except that if as one observer noted, "the idea is to die young as late as possible," that Paul Gallagher, our friend, personified this idea.

We will plan a memorial service in honor for Paul in the fall when all members of the university community are back on campus and we are able to appropriately honor one of the giants of FIU's history.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark B. Rosenberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.