

RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY REMARKS: PRESIDENT KERWIN

DR. CORNELIUS “NEIL” M. KERWIN*

For American University, the significance of this new home for the Washington College of Law speaks, as Claudio just mentioned, to [our] core values. A project of this magnitude, undertaken in times like these, reflects this University’s deep and abiding faith in the mission and work of the Washington College of Law, and [to our] great confidence that its remarkable history is simply prologue to an even more distinguished future. This exceptional facility stands on many decades of accomplishment; by the faculty, staff, and alumni of the Washington College of Law, who together have left a lasting and highly influential impact both on the development and the administration of law in the United States and literally throughout the world.

The impact is due to widely cited scholarship of great quality, highly effective teaching, both in classroom and clinical settings, and . . . countless efforts of alumni, working as practicing attorneys, judges, and in many other roles throughout society and our economy.

Not a week goes by that I, or Provost Bass, and usually both, hear from a very proud Dean about the accomplishments of a colleague, of a program, of an [alumnus or] alumna.

Our confidence in this project is enhanced by the capabilities that this new facility will make available to this tremendous faculty and student body. These new spaces are literally designed to inspire even higher levels of achievement and to communicate to faculty, students, and staff that these surroundings represent the value we place on

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their work and the centrality of the Washington College of Law to the work of American University.

Our confidence is further bolstered by a school of law created by pioneering women—by a school of law whose commitment to diversity has never wavered. Few institutions are as well positioned as our Washington College of Law for the changing demographics of this nation. And it is our Washington College of Law that has demonstrated time after time after time that excellence and diversity are mutually reinforcing values.

Our confidence is further strengthened by a faculty and programs that examine the rule of law in all of its variety and complexity. Washington College of Law programs mix rigor with innovation, ensuring students are firmly grounded in the fundamentals, while exploring cutting-edge ideas and concepts with a faculty whose work is helping to define the future.

We at American University believe the importance of the rule of law cannot be overstated. This new home for the Washington College of Law is a physical manifestation of that belief.

I'm going to close by expressing my admiration and my thanks, on behalf of the entire American University community, to Claudio Grossman. For more than two decades, his leadership has projected both the Washington College of Law and American University to the forefront of legal education and to the quest for human rights. Claudio, my friend and my colleague, this new home of the Washington College of Law is due, in part, to your vision for a school that could at once be at the forefront of developments in the law, [while] still remaining true to the values of its founders.

I'll close by thanking everyone here in this room, . . . throughout this building, and throughout these facilities, for joining us on this most auspicious occasion, marking the launch of the next great era for the Washington College of Law.