

Headline: Library and Learning Commons Dedication

President Stephen Sundborg, S.J.

Welcome! What a day! What a phenomenal moment this is for us and for our university.

Welcome to those of you who made the journey down the hill from our Mass of the Holy Spirit at Immaculate Conception, the sacred space where we begin our academic year. And welcome to the many of you who were here in the plaza, ready to greet the procession.

We gather together for one of the most significant moments in our 120-year history as a university. Today, we dedicate the Lemieux Library and McGoldrick Learning Commons. For more than a decade, the possibility of this library and learning commons existed only in our imaginations, then in renderings and then in schematics. But now, thanks to the vision, creativity, generosity and hard work of all of you, today, this spectacular building comes to life as the home of our educational aspirations.

In a few moments we will enter the building and see for ourselves what a treasure it is.

This university is ever grateful for its special friendship with the Pigott family. I want to acknowledge the generosity and vision of Ann Wyckoff, a longtime trustee and dear friend for whom the elegant Ann Pigott Wyckoff Reading Room in our new library is named.

Today, we celebrate another expression of the Pigott family's commitment to Seattle University. And if you look to the east edge of this plaza, you can see our wonderfully renewed and newly renamed James C. Pigott Pavilion for Leadership. Thanks to generosity of the PACCAR Foundation and to Chairman and CEO, Mark Pigott, we have been able to significantly remodel this building. It is named for a man who provided great leadership to SU over many years and remains a good friend of the university. With the James C. Pigott Pavilion for Leadership and the Lemieux Library and McGoldrick Learning Commons, we deepen our commitment to the formation of tomorrow's leaders. And these three buildings facing out onto this plaza—the Pigott Pavilion, the Lemieux Library and McGoldrick Learning Commons, and the Student Center—when these three buildings combine forces, our students will be transformed so that they may go forth and transform the world around them.

One of the highest hopes we have for the buildings on this plaza is that they bring together faculty and students of all disciplines and worldviews to exchange ideas and to discover new

knowledge. It is quite fitting to me that the man we call upon today for the benediction has dedicated himself fully to bringing people of all faith traditions together in dialogue and understanding. Archbishop Alexander Brunett is a leader in fostering ecumenical relations. He has also been a great friend to this university. Next month, we will have the privilege of conferring upon him the St. Ignatius Medal, our most prestigious honor, to recognize his moral and spiritual leadership, especially his service to Catholic education. Today, we ask him to bless our James C. Pigott Pavilion for Leadership and our Lemieux Library and McGoldrick Learning Commons.

Having the Archbishop here with us today got me thinking that maybe we should bring him around to take care of all the other buildings on our campus, but I didn't want to push it as I know he's a very busy man.

With or without holy water, though, we truly are a university that is most blessed. I am aware of that and grateful for it every day, but even more so on a day like today. Let me count some of the wonderful ways in which this building was blessed.

- We were blessed by the leadership of **Anne Farrell**, who chaired the committee that made this possible, as well as all the other members of that committee.
- We were blessed by our good friend, **Bill Gates, Sr., of the Gates Foundation**, who early on understood what this library could mean for our community and stepped up to make an investment that was pivotal for the project.
- We were blessed by **Rita Daubenspeck and her husband Harold**, who is with us in spirit, for their generosity and for being the ones who made it possible to honor Father James McGoldrick to whom Harold was so devoted as were generations of Seattle College and University students.
- We were blessed by **Dick and Betty Hedreen** who graciously contributed the sculpture here in the plaza as well as many more pieces of extraordinary artwork that you'll find throughout the building.
- And, we were blessed by all of you. Many of you generously supported this project. Others of you contributed the ideas that helped shape the building's design and functionality. And others provided the manual labor and craftsmanship that allowed us

to build this on time, on budget and with tremendous result. All of you have made this happen. Thank you!

And all of us, all of us have ownership in this building. Our University Librarian John Popko tells me there are nearly 1,000 seats in the library and learning commons. I have yet to sample them all, but I will say this—if this building could talk, here’s what I think it would say: “Come on in, explore, find your place and make yourself at home.”

But there’s more. To our students, this building says: “Read, process, test, question, debate, rethink, engage and collaborate.” It says, “Create something that wasn’t there before, discover who you are and imagine who you want to become.”

Even that is not all. I believe this building has just as much to say about our university and the place we are taking in the world.

Eight years ago, we adopted a vision statement for Seattle University. It read, “We will be the premier independent university of the Northwest,” and we set out to demonstrate this by virtue of our academic quality, our Jesuit Catholic inspiration and our service to society.

Since that time, we have cemented our place among the best universities in the region. We are increasingly the first choice for college-bound students, and those students who enroll with us are ever more diverse in their backgrounds and excellent in their educational accomplishments. We have hired some of the brightest minds in the land to join an esteemed faculty. We’ve gotten back in the game of Division I athletics. We are reaching out to our neighborhood as never before with our Seattle University Youth Initiative.

And now, today, we dedicate this building as the most significant investment Seattle University has ever made in academics.

Today, I believe and I think you’ll agree that the vision we set forth eight years ago to become the premier independent university of the Northwest has reached fulfillment.

For 120 years, our university has been guided by a distinctly Jesuit Catholic mission, dedicated to educating the whole person, to professional formation, and to empowering leaders for a just and humane world. Today, that mission remains unchanged. And yet in this building await new possibilities for reimagining our mission and bringing it out into the world as never before.

I believe this library and learning commons, this engine for transformation, heralds a new phase in the history of our university. Today, as we open this building’s doors we embark upon the new era of a great university.

Thank you all for being here for this celebration, but most important, thank you for bringing us to this moment.

I want to recognize a few more people who had a significant hand in building this library and learning commons, literally and otherwise.

I want to thank the architects...Norman Pfeiffer, Bill Murray, Gili Meerovitch and all our friends at Pfeiffer Partners, as well as Mike Omura and Lana Lisitsa and their colleagues at Mithun. Let's thank our good friends at Mortensen, particularly Bill Kent, Danny Keim and Jeremy Jones.

A big thanks, of course, to Steve DeBruhl of our Facilities staff and David Bonewitz of Bonewitz Project Management who managed this project so capably from beginning to end.

Let's also thank our librarians, who worked tirelessly and flexibly to move us out of the Lemieux Library, into the Interim Library and then back into this facility, and let's give a special thanks to Doug Eriksen, Jan Hartley, Mary Sepulveda and Judy Solberg.

And finally, it is clear that no project of this magnitude can be accomplished by one person. And yet there is one person without whom this project would not have been done in such magnificent fashion, and that person is John Popko, our university librarian. I am grateful to John for his vision, for his commitment and for his perseverance.

As you enter the library and learning commons you will be greeted and assisted by librarians and students. I do hope you can explore the building in all its glory.