

Judy Genshaft Honors College Grand Opening Event

Remarks for USF President Rhea Law

May 12, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Good morning, everyone! It's certainly a great day for the University of South Florida community. Can I get a Go Bulls?

That was excellent — thank you! It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the grand opening of the Judy Genshaft Honors College.

Today marks a significant milestone in the history of our institution, as we celebrate the completion of a long-held vision to build a home for the University of South Florida's honors college.

This world-class facility is the perfect place for our talented honors students to pursue their passions and create lasting memories throughout their studies at our great university — and I know they will treasure this space as they continue to ascend to new heights in their academic journeys.

I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to all those who have worked tirelessly to bring this beautiful facility to fruition — including our faculty, staff, community partners, donors, alumni, and outstanding honors students — who will one day join our global network of proud USF alumni.

I'd also like to take a moment to recognize our elected officials who joined us for this lovely celebration and whose support in the legislature helped

make this project possible.

There are so many distinguished guests joining us today on this joyous occasion. I am honored to recognize Chris Sprowls, who served as Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, from 2020-2022.

Unfortunately, Florida's Commissioner of Agriculture, Wilton Simpson, who served as President of the Florida Senate, could not be here this morning but we wanted to recognize him as well. Under their leadership of the Florida Legislature – and in no small part due to their personal efforts – USF secured the final \$8.1 million from the state to complete this state-of-the-art facility.

During their time in the legislature, they both continuously showed tireless support and unwavering commitment to the advancement of the University of South Florida and all of its campuses, and we are all so grateful for their leadership and service.

In addition to Speaker Sprowls, we are delighted that many other important government officials are joining us today. Please join me in welcoming:

- The Chancellor of the State University System of Florida, Ray Rodrigues
- State Representative Lindsay Cross
- And representatives attending on behalf of the offices of:
 - State Senator Darryl Rouson
 - State Senator Danny Burgess

- State Representative Traci Koster
- State Representative Mike Beltran
- State Representative Jennifer Canady
- State Representative Brad Yeager

Because the U.S. Congress is in session today, our elected leaders in Washington cannot be here with us in person, but we are joined by representatives attending on behalf of the offices of:

- U.S. Senator Marco Rubio
- U.S. Senator Rick Scott
- Congressman Vern Buchanan
- Congresswoman Kathy Castor
- Congresswoman Laurel Lee
- Congresswoman Anna Paulina Luna

Your continued support of our university and our world-class honors college is greatly appreciated.

The Judy Genshaft Honors College is named in honor of our university's esteemed former president, Dr. Judy Genshaft. I had the privilege of serving on the selection committee that welcomed Judy to serve as our university's sixth president — and we hit it off right away. Since then, Judy's leadership has truly been an inspiration to me.

Throughout her presidency, Judy was so involved with our students, and she worked tirelessly to maximize their success. I continuously saw the joy she had for the work of being our university's leader and for taking USF to

new heights. She — alongside the founding dean, Dr. Stuart Silverman, and the college's second dean, Dr. Chuck Adams — helped transform our university's honors program into the finest honors college in the country.

And over the years, I've considered Judy both a wonderful colleague and a dear friend, and I've greatly valued her mentorship. People who know Judy well have referred to her as the "Energizer Bunny," because we always had to chase her around and keep up with her high energy and enthusiasm for taking USF to the next level. It's a good thing that I've always enjoyed moving fast!

Judy and I have collaborated countless times over the years. We worked together closely while I served on the USF Board of Trustees. We've represented USF out in the community at various sporting events and Tampa traditions like the Gasparilla Parade. And we've traveled all over the world together — we even flew to Los Angeles to sit in the audience during an episode of Dancing with the Stars, twice!

Judy, I deeply treasure your friendship, your counsel, and your unwavering passion for our great university and the broader Tampa Bay community. Your leadership and commitment to excellence has been instrumental in shaping the success of our institution, and we are proud to honor your legacy through the Judy Genshaft Honors College.

And to both you and Steve — thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for all you have done and continue to do for the University of South Florida.