



**BALL STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

Office of the President

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
COMMENTS BY GEOFFREY S. MEARNs  
May 3, 2024**

I want to begin my remarks by expressing my gratitude to you, our trustees, for approving my recommendation that Mark Ervin be reappointed as a member of the Muncie Community Schools Board of Trustees. Mark's legal expertise and leadership experience have been great assets for the school board. I appreciate his willingness to continue serving in a role that demonstrates his commitment to the children of Muncie and to our community.

Mark's reappointment is another positive development for MCS. And so is the district's upcoming "State of the Schools" program, which will take place next week at 7 p.m. on May 8 at Southside Middle School. The purpose of the program, which will be broadcast on our public radio and television stations, is to communicate to the community the progress that MCS has made as a result of the school district's partnership with our University. I will be speaking as part of the program, along with current MCS teachers and students, school administrators, and

members of the school board. We will also be joined by Governor Eric Holcomb, who will deliver his own remarks on the topic of education in Indiana and his views of the MCS-Ball State partnership.

As you may remember, it was six years ago this month that Governor Holcomb signed House Bill 1315, the legislation that created this historic partnership. I look forward to hearing his remarks, and I remain grateful to him—and to all of the members of the General Assembly—for trusting the collective capacity of our University and our local community to work together to transform our city's public school system. It has been a remarkable journey so far—one defined by momentum and numerous milestones. But we still have much work to do, and we will continue to do that work on behalf of all the children in Muncie.

I also want to thank the Board for approving my request to recognize very generous gifts from two of our loyal donors by honoring these generous people with named spaces inside our future Performing Arts Center (PAC).

The stairwell inside the venue will become the Timothy M. Andrews Monumental Stair in recognition of Mr. Andrew's \$1 million gift to the project. Mr. Andrews is a graduate of our University whose career as a successful media executive has afforded him the opportunity to give back to his alma mater. His generosity includes funding the Andrews Graduate Assistantship in Student Affairs, as well as providing gifts to our Multicultural Center and to support

student scholarships. He also serves as a Ball State University Foundation Board Director.

The PAC will also be home to the Rhonda Newport Kaspar Stage—a recognition that honors Ball State graduates Robert and Rhonda Kaspar and their \$2.5 million gift to the project. The Kaspars are longtime benefactors of our University who have had a significant impact across campus with their gifts, including student scholarships in their name. Mr. Kaspar also serves as a Ball State University Foundation Board Director.

I am pleased to report that Governor Holcomb recently approved several contracts that will allow us to soon begin construction of our Performing Arts Center, the attached boutique hotel, and the Center for Innovation. I look forward to this work getting underway this Summer. It serves as a tangible reminder that we are one major step closer to a revived Village that will have sustained benefits for all of our friends and neighbors in East Central Indiana.

The new Performing Arts Center will be an outstanding venue for our theater and dance students.

Your approval of our new Championship Performance Center will be an outstanding strength and conditioning facility for our student athletes. I am grateful to Eric Foss for his very generous \$4 million commitment, which will enable us to provide this new training facility.

Finally, I want to thank you for approving my recommendation that we honor June Scheumann with an honorary degree—a recognition that recognizes her extraordinary contributions to our University as well as her family’s remarkable legacy at our institution.

As many of you know, June is the wife of John Scheumann, a Ball State graduate who passed away in 2020. The Scheumanns have provided lead gifts for the renovation of our Scheumann Stadium, the construction of our Scheumann Family Indoor Practice Facility, and the forthcoming construction of our Performing Arts Center.

It is our privilege to formally recognize June’s dedicated philanthropy and her loyalty to our University. I look forward to conferring upon her this much-deserved honor.

It is also a privilege to recognize our graduates who have completed their degree requirements this Spring. Tomorrow we will honor more than 2,800 candidates for the various degrees that they have earned. I am proud of their accomplishments. And I am grateful to our dedicated faculty and staff. Their commitment to our students empowered them to succeed.

I look forward to seeing all of you tomorrow morning on our beautiful—dry and sunny—Quad.

Thank you.

