



**BALL STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Office of the President

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
COMMENTS BY GEOFFREY S. MEARNES
May 6, 2022**

I want to begin my remarks by expressing my gratitude to you, our Board, for reappointing Brittany Bales, WaTasha Barnes Griffin, Keith O’Neal and Jim Williams to the Muncie Community Schools Board of Trustees. As I shared in my presentation, these dedicated leaders have made significant contributions to the transformation of MCS, and they deserve this opportunity to continue building a bright future for the children of Muncie and our community. I would like to ask Dr. Lee Ann Kwiatkowski and the newly reappointed school board members who are here today to please stand so that we can recognize you for your remarkable leadership on behalf of our public schools.

It is an exciting week to be at Ball State as we look forward to tomorrow’s Spring Commencement ceremony—our first traditional ceremonies in two years. Thank you for approving my recommendation that we honor Deborah Fallows and James Fallows with honorary degrees.

The Fallows are veteran journalists who have influenced American culture through their insights on politics, foreign affairs, and life in cities and towns across the country. And by returning to Muncie on their single-engine plane, they have chosen the same mode of transportation that inspired their best-selling book, *Our Towns*. I am grateful that, in advance of joining us for Commencement, they have flown in early to be interviewed for a future episode of my podcast and to attend today's board meeting. Deb and Jim, would you please stand so we could acknowledge you?

It is our privilege to recognize the Fallows for their lifetime accomplishments. It is also our privilege to recognize those graduates who have completed their degree requirements this Spring. Tomorrow, we will honor more than 3,400 candidates for doctoral, master's, and bachelor's degrees. I am proud of their accomplishments and offer them best wishes for their future endeavors as alumni.

I am also proud of our faculty, staff, and students who have contributed to the longstanding success of the *Ball State Daily News*. As you heard earlier today, the student newspaper recently celebrated turning 100 years old. The first issue of the paper was published on March 30, 1922, under its original name, *The Easterner*.

Today, the *Daily News* is one of the Nation's top student collegiate newspapers. The longevity of this publication demonstrates our University's dedication to teaching generations of students the craft of journalism. And the invaluable experience our students have received working for the *Daily News* has helped many of them find fulfilling careers in journalism and related fields, which serve their neighbors and communities.

Finally, I want to conclude my remarks by sharing that, right now, our women's tennis team is playing Texas—the defending national champions—in the first round of the NCAA Tournament in Austin. The women earned an automatic bid into the tournament by winning the Mid-American Conference Tournament earlier this month.

I also want to congratulate our men's volleyball team on their historic 2021-22 season. Last night, the No. 2 Cardinals played Hawaii in the semi-final round of the NCAA tournament. Unfortunately, the Cardinals did not prevail. But I remain proud of our student-athletes, who earlier this month also won their first MIVA championship in 25 years. Congratulations to Coach Donan Cruz, who was just named National Coach of the Year, and to all our players for their success on the court this season. Go Cardinals!