

SAMPLE SPEECH

President's Remarks 50TH Anniversary

On this very day, 50 years ago, AnyPlace University opened its doors to its first 67 students. They came from near and far and demonstrated great faith that this new educational venture would sustain.

Several members of our inaugural class are with us tonight. They came to us in 19XX as freshmen and four years later became our first graduating class. If you were one of those intrepid young men, would you please stand. Ladies and gentleman, it is my honor to present the AnyPlace University class of 19XX. [APPLAUSE]

As they stood in our first academic building which had yet to be named – and is now known as Smith Hall – Br. John Smith, AnyPlace's first president, greeted the students, acknowledging their act of faith and calling them to greatness. He concluded his remarks simply, but his words foretold how AnyPlace would be built, decades into the future:

“Together let us work at the creation of a place of higher learning and development of strong intellect, blessed in a way that only God can bless.”

God has surely has blessed us, and we are so grateful.

We exist today because five decades ago our Founders chose to risk everything on a hope and a dream. It was their faith, entrepreneurial spirit, and hard work that put us on the path we are currently traveling. There are no words to express our gratitude, so I would like to ask the Founders who are here with us tonight to stand and let our applause demonstrate how we feel. [APPLAUSE]

We are grateful too for our supporters – alumni, faculty, staff, and community friends – who saw what we were trying to do and said, “Yes, I want to be part of that.”

Tonight is about celebrating our 50th birthday and you, the people who have chosen to be part of our work. While we are blessed to have so many friends here with us tonight, I want to recognize a special group. Over a year ago, we had a wild idea. Let's raise 50 endowed scholarships and \$3,000,000 for our 50th anniversary. It was unprecedented in our history, and, frankly, there were nights early on in this drive when I tossed and turned over whether or not we had bitten off more than we could chew.

I shouldn't have lost a moment's sleep. I should have remembered that God does watch over us and our friends have NEVER let us down.

Tonight I am happy to report that we have exceeded our goal, raising 54 scholarships and adding \$3.1 million to our endowed scholarship resources for our students.

While I am proud of how successful this effort has been and grateful to all its donors, I must say that my proudest moment through the initiative came just a few weeks ago. In 19XX, The Founders had made a significant investment of time, faith, and money into AnyPlace University. Their dollars were the first dollars in, the start-up cash that launched all of this. It seems fitting that their dollars would be among the last into the 50th Anniversary Scholarship Initiative. Therefore, it is my honor and privilege to announce that scholarship number 50, the one that put us over the top, is The Founders' Scholarship Fund.

The banner behind me lists the names of all of our 50th Anniversary Scholarship donors. At this time, I would like to read the names of the new named, endowed scholarships that will make the AnyPlace experience even more accessible to our students. Not all of our donors could be here tonight; however, if you are here, please rise when I read the name of your scholarship and remain standing until I reach the end of the list. Please hold your applause until I have read all of the new scholarships.
[READ NAMES]

Ladies and gentleman, our 50th Anniversary Scholarship Donors. [APPLAUSE]

For 50 years now, we have built capacity, we have planted seeds, we have established roots. Along the way, we walked, stumbled, fell, got up, jogged, stopped to rest, and began again. Those 50 years prepared us for the AnyPlace University of today, 3000 students and 10,000 alumni strong.

Tomorrow, we begin our 51st year and the strategy has changed. It is time to run!

In this changing economic and cultural climate, gone are the days when educational institutions dictate the channels through which learning takes place. Today, colleges and universities must identify and address student needs and preferences in order to remain competitive.

Today's college students use words like accelerated, flexible, online, and affordable to describe their preferred learning environments. Our future success demands a resolve to meet students where they are. We will use the social media to reach out to students locally and across the country or around the world. We will design courses in new formats for delivery across new channels. We will embrace the technologies of today – and tomorrow – to harness student enthusiasm, stimulate their curiosity and creativity, and challenge them to take their place in a global economy. The AnyPlace University of tomorrow will build classrooms of bricks and mortar as well as of fiber optic cable and digital media.

It is time for this 50-year young institution to stand on the global stage. We will take students to Europe and Africa and South America and Asia. And we will bring programs to students who cannot come to our campus here in Ohio, and create opportunities for international exchanges of faculty and students. We will continue to develop our global learning programs to ensure that the AnyPlace experience is accessible to all and is never limited by geography.

Failure to embrace these types of forward-thinking strategies will brand us antiquated and stagnant. That will not be our fate. Rather we will be relevant and stimulating, offering

excellent learning experiences, hiring accomplished student-focused faculty and staff, and stewarding our curriculum and co-curricular programs to ensure that a degree from AnyPlace University continues to mean a high quality, values-based education.

And as we run into the future, we must always carry with us a bit of the past. The AnyPlace mission must always drive our work, and we must ensure the longevity of our legacy.

So here we stand, fifty years later. Fifty years of classes and students and alumni. Fifty years of planning for the future and being mindful of the past. Fifty years of prayer and faith in God. Fifty years of being able to count on our friends, like all of you, to help us grow. Fifty years of committing to making the institution that sprang from the soil of a former corn field a thriving University.

Our responsibility to our legacy and to our future students is too great to rest on our laurels. But for tonight we stand here 50 years old and mighty proud.

Thank you for being part of our past and our present. Consider tonight your official invitation to be part of our future. If you liked the last five decades, I promise *you ain't seen nothin' yet!*

You will find champagne on your tables. Please take a moment to pour yourself a glass and join me in a toast. [RAISE YOUR GLASS AND WAIT FOR THEM TO RAISE THEIR GLASSES]

Happy 50th Birthday, AnyPlace University. Tomorrow we begin anew.