

University of Utah
J. Willard Marriott Library
Rededication Program: Tradition and Transformation
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Good morning and welcome to the rededication of the J. Willard Marriott Library. My name is Joyce Ogburn and I am the director of this magnificent library as well as university librarian. It is my great pleasure to announce Mrs. Laura Bush, our keynote speaker for today, who is joined by Governor Gary R. Herbert, Mr. J. W. Marriott, Jr. and University of Utah President Michael K. Young.

Today we celebrate the coming together of a community of generous people determined to keep the library the intellectual center of the university. Let me share a few words on this occasion about the importance of this great library that belongs to you. In today's world many entities compete to engage in the generation and dissemination of knowledge. But:

- Few hold the promise of preserving this knowledge for the long term;
- Few make needed resources miraculously materialize when seemingly lost, hidden or far away;
- Few are active partners in confronting great questions and uncovering new meaning;
- Few are neutral ground where all people and ideas are welcomed; and
- Few are as permanent as a library.

More than ever in our fast-paced, information-rich, digital age the Marriott Library is critical to the mission and goals of the University. Today we celebrate tradition in holding to the best of the past and preserving continuity while we also celebrate transformation as we renew our mission and anticipate new expectations for the future. Today we celebrate the affirmation of all a library can and should be, and its influence that extends into and upholds the very fabric of community life.

Recognizing the importance of libraries to the fledgling pioneer community as far back as 1850, John Bernheisel wrote to Congress to request the establishment of the Utah Territorial Library, the origin of this great library.

At the initial dedication of this building in 1968, author Wallace Stegner remarked in his dedication speech: "It is profoundly right that this splendid library should arise in this city, to serve this community's spiritual and intellectual needs, for nowhere in the United States is the community spirit stronger or the respect for tradition greater."

In 1969 in acknowledgement of a generous gift, the library was named the J. Willard Marriott Library. At that time, Mr. Marriott, Sr. said that it was his dream "to have the privilege of helping to provide a place where learning may be achieved."

We strive to live up to his dream and catalyze the highest levels of learning here in Mr. Marriott's Library.

In the 1990s an explosion of new means of communication and learning spurred the library's first renovation. Speaking at the 1996 rededication event, Professor Karen Lawrence invoked the spirit both of continuity and change by noting that "...a great library looks forward and back at the same time." And she added: "For if the building ...has been radically altered, it is inside its walls that the real scene of transformation is occurring."

Indeed, the same is true for the present transformation that has uplifted the library by creating enticing 21C space and services. I think you will agree that in Mr. Marriott's Library we have something special that will tend to its eager students, nascent scholars, inquisitive public, and learned specialists equally well.

For this is a place where ideas can live quietly for years waiting to touch a mind, start a new conversation, or begin a revolution. Yet, this is also a lively interactive place where connections are formed, collaborations are hatched, imagination takes hold, ideas are ignited, and knowledge takes wing.

And this is a place that reaches into the Utah public schools to introduce children to the process and excitement of creating real books. This is a place that participates in and exploits an extended network of libraries, each rich with knowledge resources and eager to share their wealth to expand the possibilities for learning to a global scale.

Today we celebrate the renewal of a building, but perhaps more important, we celebrate the renewal of a principle, that of maintaining the unfettered ability to create, invent, learn, and explore; to grow and stretch as scholars and citizens; and thus to improve lives and make a better world.

And although we celebrate a physical place, libraries hold more than just physical objects: they hold both the past and the future within their grasp along with a promise to serve all who will come to our doors. The library today is reinvented, but not by breaking with the past. Instead, just as the physical foundations remain, reinforced and rebuilt to provide stability and flexibility, the library maintains its intellectual foundations and principles while girded and clad in ever evolving technologies and approaches.

In Wallace Stegner's words, we arise once again, with new hopes and new aspirations that look forward to many a new day of intellectual adventure and discovery. I want you to take away with you the image of ↑soaring ceilings and soaring spirits; of →vibrant vision and vibrant voices; of unfolding ideas and unfolding dreams; the image of a place that will continue to inspire generations of scholars to achieve their very best work.

My favorite words in Katharine Coles' poetic tribute to the globes are these: "Every brain's a star. So every eye raised toward heaven escapes its gravity and lofts a body skyward as it goes."

I invite you to escape the gravity of the everyday and to explore the whole of this magnificent library by visiting every treasure, demonstration and exhibit awaiting you - and by so doing you will experience the sublime pleasure of exploring the traditions of our rich past while witnessing the transformation to an exciting future being led by your reborn J. Willard Marriott Library.

Thank you, thank you all for your appreciation and attendance today. This is your library - enjoy!