



**Remarks of Chairman Gregory W. Powell
Harold Alfond Foundation**

Dedication of the Harold Alfond Academic Center at Thomas College

**Waterville, Maine
October 17, 2014**

Thank you that introduction, and a special thank you from the Harold Alfond Foundation to Conrad Ayotte and Todd Smith for your long-time and extraordinary leadership and commitment to Thomas College. Conrad, Todd, Alan Ryan, Brian Bernatchez, and the entire board have been an outstanding team and are rock star models of what colleges across America should have for leadership. And, President Lachance, thank you. Your executive leadership has been extraordinary and, may I say, your energy is as unbridled as it is infectious.

We are also most thankful for all the supporters of the College here today and grateful for your partnership. And a special thanks to Ellen and Henry Hinman for the wonderful gift they have made to Thomas and for leading the Campaign with their extraordinary generosity. Today, we celebrate the new Academic Center, Hinman Hall, the launch of the Scholarship Fund, the new turf field complex, and outstanding success of a Campaign this College worried might not succeed.

What Laurie didn't tell you is how smart she is and that Thomas asked for two extensions from the Foundation as a hedge to complete its Campaign. One extension we granted reluctantly and, as we just heard, wasn't needed. The other we declined, and that wasn't needed either. We knew how strong, resourceful, and committed you all are and, at this moment, it feels very good to have been right.

Before offering a closing thought, I would like to take a moment and recognize Bill and Joan Alfond who have been outstanding supporters of this College. In addition, Bill has been an invaluable member of the Harold Alfond Foundation Board of Trustees.

Bill and Joan, together with Foundation Vice-President Travis Cummings and our newest employee, Jarod Deanis, a graduate of Thomas College, are here today to celebrate and to join me in thanking all of you for all that has been accomplished.

We are on a great mission here at Thomas College. Over 60% of future jobs in America will require higher education. Yet, less than 35% of Americans have enjoyed the benefits of higher education. Clearly, there is much work to do if America is to remain competitive and a leader in the world. The key to our nation's future prosperity and leadership is what happens here at Thomas, a school dedicated to providing high-quality education to first-generation college students and assuring that, upon graduation, these students have meaningful, good paying jobs. Your mission is all about where America needs to go.

In the days ahead, higher education will face major challenges. Escalating costs, disruptive technologies, competition, high student debt, a slow job market, and the ups and downs of a still-recovering economy. The pressure to make higher education more affordable and less costly are mounting as we speak. And with that challenge comes great opportunity and promise. Today, when we stop and take a moment to reflect on all that has been accomplished at Thomas College with its rock star leadership, committed board, wonderful faculty and staff, and pioneering students, we can be as confident that Thomas will succeed as we are proud of your accomplishments.

Thank you for these few minutes of your time. Thank you for being such great partners, and congratulations.