



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

**Thomas College Groundbreaking for the Harold Alfond Academic Center
Waterville, Maine
October 18, 2013**

Thank you, Conrad, and good morning, everyone. Fellow trustee Bill Alfond and I are delighted to be here today for the ceremonial groundbreaking of the new Academic Center.

For Thomas College, today's groundbreaking is an important marker for all the reasons we have just heard about. But it is also enormously important for what it says about the conviction, confidence and courage of your board, your President, and the college's supporters. These qualities are essential to a winning team. And here at Thomas, these qualities are not in short supply.

It has been a year and a half since we last gathered to announce the Foundation's \$5 million Challenge to help build the Academic Center.

In that announcement, we noted the strength of the College—its leadership, its faculty, its finances, its growth in programs, and its investments in new infrastructure. We knew much had been accomplished and that the bar was high. But we were confident that you would raise your aspirations still higher—raise the bar—to grow even stronger.

And you have done exactly that.

You have an outstanding new President who, among her many qualifications is a distinguished graduate degree from a very distinguished institution. And Laurie has picked up right where President Spann left off in setting a clear vision for the school and forging new partnerships in the community.

In her brief tenure, Thomas has already launched at least eight new undergraduate and Master's programs. Most impressively, these programs have been developed in partnership with businesses that are ready to hire. From Cyber-Security to Educational Leadership, from Literacy to an MBA with a concentration in Health Care Management—Thomas can guarantee jobs because it works with businesses to understand and meet their needs.

And, since our announcement, the College has continued to expand and improve the campus. It's just terrific. The new turf field. The new student commons. And my favorite, though it may not seem major, is the new entrance sign at the top of the hill which lets the world know that Thomas is "on the move".

Before the ceremonial shovels go into the ground today, I would like to leave you with two thoughts—one about the mission of Thomas and the other about the Foundation's Challenge.

First, the mission. We see Thomas College as an exemplary model for connecting education with the workforce needs of today's competitive economy. Over 60% of our nation's citizens do not enjoy the benefits of higher education. Yet in the next decade, over 60% of jobs in our economy will require post-graduate degrees. For many colleges, connecting workforce needs with higher education has been a recent epiphany. But here at Thomas, you have long recognized the importance of bringing higher education to more of our young citizens and especially to those who are the first in their families to attend college. And you have done that by conspicuously linking higher education with better employment opportunity. Your mission is vital to the future of our state and nation, and we are honored to support it.

Now about the Challenge. If Harold Alfond were here, he would not want us to close without one final, very important message.

As a sports fan, Mr. Alfond loved teamwork and healthy competition, and his grants often challenged institutions to raise dollars from the community. In line with that history and thinking, our \$5 million grant commitment to Thomas is structured in the form of a matching challenge. For every dollar Thomas raises, the Foundation pays a dollar, up to \$5 million. Great progress has been made in meeting our challenge, but we still have some work to do to cross the finish line. We know you are up to the task. And we urge all Thomas supporters to join the team, to rise to our Challenge and help to build this new Academic Center. You can be sure that Thomas is a winner!

Thank you.