



**Thomas College – Press Conference
Tuesday, March 22, 2011**

Harold Alfond Academic Center and Harold and Bibby Alfond Scholarship Fund

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

Thank you for that warm introduction, President Spann. And good morning distinguished guests, board members, faculty, staff, and students. And a special welcome to our State's Treasurer and native son of Waterville, Bruce Poliquin.

Nearly five years ago, at the age of 92, Harold Alfond beamed with pride as he stood with us in this beautiful athletic complex at its grand opening. Today, we gather once again to celebrate the growth and accomplishments of Thomas College and set down a marker for its continuing success.

I am honored to be here to make a special announcement.

But before I do, I want to say a few words about Thomas College in a way that Chairman Ayotte and President Spann are much too modest to do. As Will Rogers used to say, "It ain't bragging if it's true". So let's see if we can make Conrad and George blush, with a few truisms about Thomas.

To the Harold Alfond Foundation, Thomas College is a gem of higher education in Maine. It has an outstanding board, faculty, staff and administration. It has outstanding students!

Under the leadership of President Spann and Board Chair Ayotte, Thomas has achieved:

- Exceptional growth in student enrollment;
- Major capital investments in this campus;
- A steady increase in academic programs; and,
- And built a balance sheet like FORT KNOX.

Under their leadership, Thomas has become an exemplary educator for Maine's workforce at a time when the economic mission of education to build the competency of our workforce has become imperative. And – true to its roots – Thomas has remained accessible and affordable to its students, most of whom are from Maine and many of whom are the first in their families to attend college.

We see President Spann, the Thomas Board and faculty as visionary in shaping innovative curricula to meet the needs of today's competitive economy. By offering students internship opportunities with over 170 businesses and organizations, Thomas College provides its students with a clear-cut vision of how education can lead to a more productive and financially secure life.

And to top off this impressive list of Thomas qualities is the ultimate assurance of confidence in the education provided here.

Every Thomas student is guaranteed a job after graduation in their chosen field of study.

In sum, Thomas College is a winner in every respect and the Harold Alfond Foundation is proud to have been its partner over the years.

Which leads me to the "announcement" part of this announcement.

To put it plainly, any college that guarantees its students a job after college is a college our Foundation wants to support.

So today, on behalf of the Harold Alfond Foundation, we are delighted to announce a **grant commitment of \$5 million dollars.**

And in true Harold Alfond style, our grant will be a match – meaning for every dollar contributed to Thomas we will match it up to \$5 million dollars.

There are 2 parts to our grant.

First, we are awarding \$4 million to build a new Academic Center with classrooms, a new library and more. And if it's anything like this Athletic Center, it's going to be beautiful!

Second, we are awarding another \$1 million to boost support of your Annual Fund and fund financial aid scholarships at the same time. For the next 3 years, all donations to the

Thomas Annual Fund will be matched dollar for dollar by the Foundation. The Annual Fund dollars will help the school operate in general and the Foundation's dollars will endow a new Scholarship fund to help Thomas students pay for school.

Today, Thomas College is stronger than it was 5 years ago when Harold Alfond celebrated the opening of this fine facility here in this very room.

And if Harold Alfond were here today, he would use the occasion to challenge you to build on your success and achieve even greater heights of excellence in the years to come. And he would speak to **you**, the students of Thomas. He would tell you how he came of age in the Great Depression as the bloodiest war in human history lurked on the horizon, never went to college but instead went to work for 25 cents an hour in a Kennebunk Maine Shoe factory.

He would tell you that, today, in a world of fierce competition from emerging economies like China – a world made smaller by the magic of the internet – **a college education is not a luxury, but a necessity.**

And finally he would thank your school for the fine education it is providing, and he would thank you for the great things you will do in the years to come with that education to make our state and nation prosper and grow.