

Remarks of William C. Harris, President and CEO of Science Foundation Arizona

To the distinguished guests of the dedication of the new BIO5 and University of Arizona College of Medicine Research Buildings

December 1, 2006

Thank you President Shelton for those kind words and introduction. It is truly a privilege for me to be a part of this celebration today as Arizona witness's history in the making. Today, due in large part to the collaborative efforts of three very important pillars – academia, business and government – the BIO5 and Medical Research Buildings come to life.

This is a special day for Vicki Chandler and Keith Joiner and this celebration is in large part a result of their considerable effort. To Vicki and Keith, I say “job well done”.

First, let me start with the pillar of academia, as it is near and dear to my heart.

The University of Arizona is a center of learning and development for students and faculty. Nothing it does is more important than creating talent. It is truly a world-class institution – it is Arizona's first university and we should be proud of that fact. These buildings, and the new programs housed therein, will act as “magnets,” *continually* attracting talented faculty, students and post docs bringing the best and the brightest in the world to Arizona.

We already have proof this is working – As of June 2006, BIO5 assisted in the recruitment of 35 new faculty members and retention of 7 senior faculty members. Now that the momentum has begun we need to leverage this investment to attract even more talent and make Arizona as desirable and competitive as states like California for research-driven economies.

I think we can all agree that education is the foundation for a strong science-based economy and the dedication of these two facilities demonstrates a commitment to building a more diverse economic future and prosperity for the State.

In fact, the BIO5 Institute has already made tremendous strides in fueling economic development. It has brought together more than 140 faculty members from 5 disciplines, together obtaining approximately \$80 million in competitive research dollars each year.

BIO5 also is increasing technology transfer; fostering bioindustry partnerships; enhancing science literacy and training; and now with the completion of this tremendous facility, is home to cutting-edge research facilities.

And here is where the pillar of business comes in – BIO5 has supported the formation of 10 faculty-created companies in the last three years alone. But we can't stop here. We need some of these faculty-initiated companies to truly succeed – to have the ambition to grow and create quality employment opportunities for Arizonans and, yes, over time create the culture so that the *next* Bill Gates is from Arizona.

While the completion of these buildings is a great start by the citizens of this state to invest in the competitive infrastructure necessary for an innovation-based economy, we must rely heavily on our State's entrepreneurial spirit and the business community at large to support this economic growth over the long term. And what is the one thing most businesses will tell you they must have before they can offer such support – quality talent. *I hope you are starting to see a common theme emerging.*

While we can strive to “import” talent, we must make it our mission to grow and retain this talent at home. How do we accomplish this?

I believe we need to focus our energy on being the *first state* that has a university system that serves the state in ways heretofore unthought-of. To improve the human spirit as Dr. Shelton declared in his inaugural. All of the universities need to commit again to a mission of responsibility to the citizens of Arizona.

Imagine what we could accomplish in this beautiful place called Arizona if we worked together more effectively to build a vibrant society and economy for our children and grandchildren. If we keep the focus on the end game, we will get tremendous value out of this investment that we celebrate here today.

These buildings also serve as a symbol of a commitment to the future of our *entire* education system. A commitment to high performance and a commitment to supporting economic prosperity for the state so that we have the resources to invest in health, infrastructure and building a top tier K-12 system. That is, our *shared* goal is to move our K-12 system to a higher national ranking to ensure our

children excel and our and this is the most important investment we can make in our economy as well.

I suggest our initial target should be for the top ¼ of the states – say number 10 to 12 for the sake of this discussion today. I think working together we can achieve this objective and the benefit to the state will be enormous when we do so. This should be an Arizona goal – not a Republican or a Democratic goal – an Arizona goal. This will take leadership and consensus but I believe this is achievable **if** we decide to do it because this is in fact Arizona, the “can do” state.

And, to achieve this goal in K-12 education we need the universities writ large to become more accountable for excellence in our K-12 system. The brain power and talent that is in our universities must become engaged in new ways as these wonderful institutions have the *potential* to move us forward uniquely -- just as the land grant university of the late 1800s helped to transform the US from an agrarian to industrialized economy.

Enter the pillar of government.

What always impressed me about Arizona was that the founders of the state had the wisdom, in my reading of the state constitution, to commit themselves to education. They clearly identified that the university should be accessible and as inexpensive as possible so as to afford many people the opportunity to receive a quality education. Now, I am quite sure all of this audience has read the constitution, but just in case, let me quote directly:

Article 11 Section 6. *“The university and all other state educational institutions shall be open to students of both sexes, and the instruction furnished shall be as nearly free as possible. The legislature shall provide for a system of common schools by which a free school shall be established and maintained in every school district for at least six months in each year, which school shall be open to all pupils between the ages of six and twenty-one years.”*

To me, this commitment to and vision for education that is defined in our constitution is inspirational.

In addition, the US Government had the foresight to set aside land grants for institutions more than a century ago – to the great benefit of our society as a whole – to create the so-called land grant

universities that focused on agriculture and mechanical engineering – the industry of the times. And the U of A is the land grant institution of Arizona. I ask you, do we have the vision or, perhaps, the wisdom to bring the land grant tradition into the 21st century in order to support Arizona's information-based economy? That is, can we imagine the Arizona universities working together to serve the business community – start-ups and large companies – just as the land grant model served the rancher and farmer of the late 1800s and through the middle of the 1900s?

Can you imagine the impact on Arizona and America if we have an equivalent transformation of society as occurred with the leadership of the original land grant model? Now, there are many people here today who are far wiser and more experienced than I am but my suggestion here is to use this event to inspire a bold new future for Arizona where we do it the Arizona way and in so doing provide a model that others will admire and follow.

History will point to the wisdom of these three pillars, academia, business and the government coming together to invest in the future. Those of you who have read NAS report *The Gathering Storm* or Tom Friedman's book, *The Flat Earth*, know this to be true – that is, we need to work together in new ways.

Science Foundation Arizona has the potential to be the "tool" that can leverage this investment in bricks and mortar into something even more significant. Science Foundation Arizona will invest in creating a competitive advantage and we will help Arizona compete on the global stage head to head – brain to brain – with speed and talent that is second to none. Together we will create a spirit of public-private partnership that will advantage Arizona and help us compete in this tough global market, where first and foremost talent counts.

Arizona is a small place, population wise – believe it or not. And it cannot afford to let talent slip away. We must be a “can do” state that values education and prosperity as the cornerstones to a high-quality of life for our citizens and a place where we have a broad-based economy so that all of our children can elect to work and live here.

My contention is very simple: that much of what we must do together is about human capital and talent. Unless we have the right kind of talent available and growing, we cannot be successful in the long-term.

I believe the strength of these pillars, coming together in public-private partnerships, is crucial to supporting the foundation for building Arizona's talent base. Much like the BIO5 Institute gains its strength from the collaborative efforts of five distinct science disciplines, so, too must we harness the strength of our business resources, government representatives and academic leaders to demonstrate our excellence in science on a regional, national and global scale.

The opening of these buildings is the first of many milestones that will herald a new day, a day in which Arizona is the most IP friendly state in the nation. A day in which we are the next "Silicon Valley" – as I believe we have far more silicon and sun and far less regulation than our California neighbors. It only makes sense that we should become the magnet for business creation, the 21st century model for excellence and accomplishment. I believe Arizona has the ability to achieve this ambition.

We are excited by this investment and what has been built here in Tucson. We are proud of the accomplishments of the past. But, we are determined to build the future and this is the start. We will add talent, companies and opportunity. We will create a culture that focuses on building Arizona and the future of Arizonans. We are Arizona and by working together as the pillars of society we will create the future for our children and grandchildren. These investments will pay off — for years and years to come.

This is indeed a great day for Arizonans.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here and our thanks to the community of investors for their wisdom in betting on Arizona's future by enabling this infrastructure.

Vicki, Keith and Robert enjoy today as it is so special. But, tomorrow, get to work building the future!