

**Remarks by UNCSA Chancellor-Elect Lindsay Bierman
April 11, 2014**

I want to thank President (Tom) Ross, Rob King, Ann Lemmon, and all the staff, faculty, deans, students, trustees, and so many other supporters who I've been essentially speed dating over the last few months—and in secret I might add. I must also give a special shout out to Provost David Nelson, who has been juggling many conflicting priorities during the interim, and Chancellor (James) Moeser for everything he has done to set us up for success. I have big shoes to fill as I work with all of you to advance the School of the Arts, and to craft and spread the story of this very special and distinct public institution.

I've loved my job at *Southern Living*, and I'm proud of all the creative talent I've recruited to Birmingham and mentored over the years. I'm also proud of all the ways we've diversified the brand way beyond print—you may have heard that we launched a concert series, a hotel collection, a program to brand entire neighborhoods, and just days before I got the call from Tom (Ross) we had finalized a contract with one of Hollywood's top producers for a fantastic television opportunity which I had been working on since last summer.

But all of that aside, over the past year or so, my heart has been pulling me in a new direction—toward a career in higher education, to serve a higher purpose. After 20-plus rewarding and fulfilling years in the publishing business, I realized that as editor of the country's 7th largest monthly consumer title, where I've answered to an army of 18 million brand loyalists every month, I had achieved what I set out to do in the industry—and with 25 working years still ahead of me, I began to think about my second act.

I had done some soul searching and explored a few options last year, but then this door opened—and introduced me to a world that immediately felt like home. The role of Chancellor at the School of the Arts brings me back to my roots as an artist. I was an architect before I became an editor, and after earning my Master's degree in architecture from the University of Virginia, I went on to work for the renowned New York architect Robert A. M. Stern, whose firm has designed buildings across the globe, including the Student and Academic Services Buildings right here at UNC Chapel Hill. But my interest in the arts can be traced even further back, all the way to 11th grade, when I got my first big break on the stage as a member of the barbershop quartet in the Plymouth-Canton High School drama club production of the 1957 Broadway hit *The Music Man*. (For those of you not familiar with the story, it's ironic to note that the quartet is made up of bickering school board members who finally come together in great harmony. But don't worry, tempting as it may be, George Burnette and I won't resort to song when we come asking for appropriations. My post-puberty voice just doesn't have the same ring to it.)

On a deeper level, the role of Chancellor more closely aligns with the values I learned from my parents, who've always been strong supporters of music, opera, and theater. My dad played the sax and flute as an engineering student at MIT, and to this day he writes reviews for all kinds of performances in San Diego, and recently appeared for a jazz improv gig on a downtown stage. What has inspired me most is how the small volunteer organization which they lead—called Advocates for Classical Music—has sent docents into to public schools across Southern California to teach youth of all ages and demographics the basic listening skills to help them appreciate our world's rich music history.

APPENDIX CC

You have to wonder what makes a symphony endure in concert halls over the course of centuries. Whenever I hear a waltz by Johann Strauss, see an uplifting production or a moving film, or watch a ballerina defy gravity, I think about how each of the school's disciplines tap into universal truths of art, beauty, and humanity. And that's why I decided to go for it, and why I'm here today.

If you think about it, what do most of us do to escape the tyranny of email and all the digital ephemera that numbs and distracts us on our smartphones? We watch movies. We listen to music. We treat our families to a Broadway show. We see *The Nutcracker* year after year. We send our children to dance classes and music lessons so they can experience what it's like to get off their computers for more than two minutes and express themselves more mindfully and physically.

We engage in more meaningful forms of perception through the arts to recalibrate our senses and seek experiences that entertain, inform, inspire, and delight us. The School of the Arts was born nearly 50 years ago not only to train world-class performing artists, but also to bring forth greater joy in the world, and to ensure a cultural awareness and continuity that enrich all of our lives. Some may consider the arts a soft subject or even a luxury. They aren't. Grand operas, great films, iconic symphonies, and epic productions represent the pinnacles of mankind's ingenuity, creative genius, and capacity to stir our souls. I see art institutions like this one as absolutely critical to our quality of life and the vitality of any society.

I'll close by saying that I'm honored and humbled to stand at this podium. We may face some tough challenges ahead, but clearly I wouldn't be here if I was at all afraid to be bold and take risks. I'm energized and excited for this chance to build on the school's incredible legacy and to work with all of the faculty, staff, students, and supporters to set our course for the next 50 years of innovative and leading-edge arts education. We've only just scratched the surface of what we can do as a catalyst and an engine for the new creative economy in North Carolina, the South, and our nation.

Thank you.