


From: Jonathan Greene jgreene@richmondregister.com 
Subject: Fwd: Message from the President
Date: December 11, 2019 at 10:47 AM
To:

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From: President's Office
Sent: Wednesday, December 11, 2019 9:40 AM
Subject: Message from the President



To the Members of the EKU Community,

The working title of my next book is “Every Epoch Requires a Fresh Start.” This is a quote from Daniel Coit Gilman, the first president of Johns Hopkins University, and the subject of my work.

Such is the case at this time for Eastern Kentucky University, my family, and me.

Effective January 6, 2020, I am stepping down as president of EKU. I understand the transition timeline is brief; however, this next year will be a crucial time for the University and higher education in Kentucky. At the request of Chair Diaz, I will remain as an advisor to the Board of Regents through the period of presidential transition. In addition to lending my assistance and full support to the University and the next administration, I intend to use the next year to research and write my Gilman manuscript, which is under contract with Johns Hopkins University Press.

In the near future, my family and I plan to create time to personally say “thank you” to the people with whom we have worked so closely. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve the students, faculty, staff, and community. Thank you for taking us in and making us a part of the EKU Colonel Family. This has become our home. We have tried to reciprocate your kindness by doing our best on behalf of this remarkable institution and its outstanding people.

Next month will mark the start of my 19th year as a university president. Professionally, there is nothing I enjoy more than working in public higher education, and – in keeping with my love of quotations – I have always endeavored to follow the axiom first espoused by Robert Baden-Powell: “Leave it better than how you found it.” EKU has continued to grow academically on campus and online, formed critical public/private partnerships to transform our appearance, addressed many immediate and long-term financial needs, planned for future prosperity, and, most importantly, transformed the lives of thousands of citizens. And all of this has been done despite some very significant and persistent financial headwinds. Together, we have become stronger with a resolve to fulfill our commission to provide educational access to all who enter our gates.

Friday, I will shake hands with hundreds of our newest graduates, and there is no prouder moment as a university president than seeing this milestone of personal achievement for our students. I wish you all the very best and know you will represent your alma mater to the fullest.

My hope going forward is that the state and all supporters of ECU will continue to recognize higher education and particularly Eastern as primary priorities. The transformative power that touches so many lives and contributes so much to our communities must be fostered. Kentucky depends on it.

Having the opportunity to lead this institution represents some of the most exciting and rewarding years of my career. It is also one of the great privileges of my life. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of the inspiring tradition that is ECU.

Go Colonels!

Michael Benson



EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

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