Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to share this wonderful celebratory event with you.

Being a university president is, to say the least — interesting. I sometimes use the analogy that it is very similar to being the commanding officer of a military installation. First, you have to live on base. Second, you’re always on duty. And third, you are deeply proud that you have the privilege to serve outstanding men and women who are working to make their dreams come true.
One of my more pleasant duties, or rather my honor, is to take this time to share with you some of the many successes at Shippensburg, to tell you about the bright future I see for the university and, most importantly, to thank you for everything that you have done and continue to do for Ship and its students.

When I became president nearly three years ago -- I begin my fourth year in January 2010— and it has been an incredible three years — I was told by many about the spirit of the campus community and about the unfailing support the university receives from its proud alumni and its many generous friends. Those reports didn’t adequately describe the depth of the support, actually the love of, this university by so many individuals, including all of you.
That is seen in the tireless work that was done by Gary and Mary Jo Grove who served as the Annual Fund’s National Chairs for not only 2007-2008, but also did a repeat as chairs in 2008-09. Thanks to their dedication, the annual fund continued to provide much needed funds for the university. Their commitment to Ship is greatly appreciated.

The support is also seen by Don and Jo Ann Smith, the new Annual Fund National Chairs for 2009-10 and 2010-11 as they begin what I know will be very successful leadership of the current campaign. I know that despite the economic challenges our nation faces, their guidance will again enable our students and faculty to have the fiscal support they need.
And, of course, the entire campus community is sincerely grateful for the support you here tonight provide. Some of you are alumni who have benefited greatly from your education and experiences at Shippensburg. Some of you are friends of the university who recognize the important role Shippensburg plays in the future of Pennsylvania and our nation. But all of you have made the decision — indeed made a deliberate choice, — to give of yourselves and your resources to ensure Shippensburg remains the flagship of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

It was a wise decision, and I promise you that we will use your gifts wisely as we continue to build on our successes, and there continue to be many in a multitude of areas. Among them are:
• A record enrollment this year of 6,942 undergraduate students and 1,311 graduate students for a total of 8,253. This includes more than 1,700 first-year students and more than 440 transfer students. Percentage wise, the increases were 8 percent at the graduate level, 3 percent at undergraduate level and 4 percent overall. Despite the challenges of the economy, the fact that we have set a record for enrollment shows that even more students, both traditional and non-traditional, recognize and appreciate the value of the educational opportunities at Ship.

• During the summer we received what I consider to be one of the finest reports ever issued by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The website of the Commission reads very
simply under most recent commission action: June 25, 2009 – To reaffirm accreditation and to commend the institution for the quality of the self-study process. The Periodic Report is due June 1, 2014 and the next site visit will be 2018-19. In the letter to me reaffirming our 10-year reaccreditation, the commission said that “Overall, Shippensburg knows its mission and is performing in an exemplary manner. It is an institution of integrity, and a place of significant student learning.” That is a wonderful compliment by our peers and is an important acknowledgment that we do what we do very, very well.
• Once again, the university has been listed among the best institutions in the North region by U.S. News and World Report in the 2010 edition of its America's Best Colleges publication. When you look at the categories, graduation rate, class size, percentage of faculty who are fulltime, you realize that — year in and year out — we do very well and continue to maintain our standing.

• We continue to look for ways to encourage individuals to join the Ship family. We have signed an agreement with Harrisburg Area Community College that will now allow members of its honors program to transfer those credits to Ship and become part of the Ship honors program.
• In September, we cut ribbons to re-open Lehman Library and Reisner Dining Hall. The library project, at a total cost of nearly $1.5 million, renovated the main floor's 24,000 square feet and involved completely revamping the area to make more communal and collaborative study areas as well as move the Learning Center to its new home in the facility. We added a new library classroom and instruction labs, a conference room, research and study areas, and six group study rooms for students.

• The Reisner project renovated and expanded the facility. Among the changes are cooking areas have been moved into the main dining area and are more interactive; student dining space was
expanded in an open and airy facility that now seats 900; and the Tuscarora Room more than doubled in size to 8,000 square feet to allow for larger banquets and special events. And here’s an interesting statistic you might be interested in: the chefs in Reisner make 200 pounds of pizza dough fresh every day. It seems pizza will always be a staple of our students’ diets.

- Last month, a number of members of the campus community, especially students, helped break ground for a project that will update and modernize Huber Art Center. Some of you may remember that Huber was originally the campus library for 37 years to Lehman Library opened and it became home to the art department. It will be completely renovated and a new addition will
connect to the original building by a central glass-enclosed tower. We plan for it to re-open for class in Spring Semester 2011.

- We continue to plan for major work on the Ceddia Union Building. This project will both renovate the current building and include a new addition that will provide needed space for students as well as the bookstore. We have received approval from the State System and hope to begin work in March 2010.

As always, I invite you to visit campus at any time to see our wonderful facilities and to learn more about our plans. Our outreach efforts, our way of giving back to the community, also continue.
The Small Business Development Center enjoyed a very successful year serving 296 clients and providing a total of 2490 hours of consulting from July 1, 2008 to June 20, 2009. During that time, a total of $3,047,000 financing was secured by SBDC clients and invested in business start-ups, business expansion and business purchases. The SBDC also offered 68 public educational programs for 661 attendees.

The Growing Edges Community Counseling Clinic has expanded its outreach, both in number of clients served and programs offered, since opening in Spring 2008. The facility has now helped more than 175 clients and recently
collaborated with other university departments to launch **Survive & Thrive**, a program to give adults practical skills in both money matters and ways to deal with stress. The community counseling center is the **only one** of its kind offered on a campus of one of the 14 PASSHE universities and was the subject of a presentation recently at the national meeting of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision in San Diego.

- The Pennsylvania Alliance for Geographic Education' has moved to Shippensburg University in part due to recognition of the university's commitment to teachers and to education in the state. The program, part of the
National Geographic Society, will operate as part of Shippensburg's geography/earth science department under the leadership of Dr. Janet Smith, associate professor of geography/earth science.

- A new program between our criminal justice department and the Borough of Chambersburg Police Department will provide that department with needed support and provide students with a new internship opportunity. As part of the internship, the student will work up to 20 hours a week to support the non-law enforcement public service and safety functions or duties of the department and other duties such as developing and coordinating crime prevention and education programs. We hope to be able to
expand this program in the future to other municipalities.

And to show we are a diverse organization, Stephanie Anderson Witmer, assistant professor of communications/journalism, was a featured guest earlier this semester on the “Morning Living" show broadcast over the Martha Stewart Living Radio Service on Sirius XM Satellite Radio. Her topic: Killer Pies. The interview was based on her book about the top 50 pie recipes. Just goes to show that you can learn a lot at Ship.

As you can see, we have many successes in which all of us, including you, can take great pride. They are, however, just the beginning of an even brighter future for this great university. A major component
of our plans the work that started this semester on the academic master plan that will help guide the university as we continue to try and meet the ever-changing needs of our students and others in the region. This project will review our current programming make recommendations as to programs that will be in demand as our workforce, and businesses and industries adapt to societal needs. It is a difficult task when, in some cases, we are trying to prepare students for jobs and skills that don’t even exist. Could the individuals who founded this university ever envisioned we’d offer programs in nanotechnology?

As important as programs are, people are even more important. Students, in particular, are the heart of this university and the reason we do what we do for
them. No matter what programs we plan, no matter what work is done on our facilities, building up our people is key to success.

- To do this we need continued support for endowed scholarships to bring students or outstanding skills and potential to Ship, to take advantage of our many academic opportunities.

- To do this, we need continued support for our joint undergraduate student/faculty research that offers students the chance to work with faculty members to develop their research and analytical skills. It also allows faculty members to enhance their research opportunities and skills.
To do this, we need continued support for endowed professorships that allow us to bring in the best and brightest faculty to share their wisdom and insight with these eager learners.

To do all of these, we need the support of generous benefactors like you who make our vision possible.

The future of this university is one of great promise and hope. According to former Pennsylvania Governor Gifford Pinchot, “The vast possibilities of our great future will become realities only if we make ourselves responsible for that future.” We — **YOU** — are responsible for the greatness this university will undoubtedly achieve and I thank you for sharing that responsibility.
Or, in the words of that great and wise philosopher, Yogi Berra, “The future ain’t what it used to be.” It isn’t. It’s much better.

Thank you again for all that you have done for Ship and thank you for being here tonight.