

Ladies and gentleman welcome and thanks for joining us this evening to celebrate our first four students in the **Kelly-Strul First in Family Scholarship Program**.

President and First Lady Kelly thanks for opening your home and being such gracious hosts.

This evening is to celebrate our first four students in the program: Odjeenie Jean Louis, Isabel Hidalgo, Neasha Prince and Angie Joseph. **This is all about YOU being successful in your lives and then giving back to your community by sharing your experiences at FAU and getting others to understand that there is hope and caring out there for them to take advantage of.**

You are our ambassadors and we are relying on you just as you can rely on us for guidance, encouragement and support. Thanks for choosing FAU. We are blessed to have you attend our institution.

As President Kelly stated. **“Some of Florida’s most talented high school graduates accepted to FAU will never set foot on campus. Not because they lack desire or are unwilling to work hard for a college education, but because they simply cannot afford it.** The expense of attending FAU goes well beyond the cost of tuition. Housing, meals, books and fees can easily add up and prevent deserving students from starting or completing their FAU education.”

I am in awe of the FAU Team. Dr. John Kelly for his guidance, leadership, attracting incredible talent to FAU, then keeping that talent due to the amazing culture at this institution, the time he spends with the kids, and I can go on and on. **John you are a great leader and a breath of fresh air and all of this with humility and grace.**

Danita Nias: You are something special – always positive, great insight, incredible organizational skills, constant caring about the kids and the ability to always say yes and then get it done. No wonder I love working with you.

Dr. Corey King and Tracy Boulukos (and your team): **Your competence, love and caring for our students is what inspired me to become totally involved with the magic at FAU.** Your leadership, caring, hand holding where necessary is an inspiration to us all.

John, Danita, Corey and Tracy you are the reason for my passion and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

To the rest of the FAU Team who have helped us, Peter Hull, Elise Morgenstern, Elizabeth Tucker and Meghan Deford – thank you.

To our incredible board: Arthur Adler, Howard Boilen, Glen Stein, Jeff Queen, Andy Queen, Michael Lissauer, Dr. John Kelly; What can I say - **your guidance,**

commitment to our students is an amazing asset to this program. Thanks for your selfless effort.

Carolyn Kelly: Well this all started over a year ago when I was talking to Carolyn during dinner at the Kelly home where we started to discuss a special scholarship program at FAU. I was originally planning to work with four kids over a four-year period where these students would graduate in four years, which would help me learn the ins and outs. Then there were regular meetings on a collaborative effort with the FAU Team and **I quickly realized we had magic at FAU.**

As stewards of this great country we HAVE TO HELP THESE STUDENTS who are deserving of a great education due to their talent, decency, caring and guts.

To my darling wife Sally who puts up with my focus on numerous issues – THANK YOU. Sally cannot question this one, as it was initially her idea. Sal you are my best friend, my partner and ALWAYS on my side; let me quantify that most of the time.

This is a turnkey program: Carefully selected mentors work one on one with the student for four years: on **campus housing** with a department head to provide guidance when needed, **financial literacy** workshop to teach financial skills, **embracing Owl Pride** in football and other sports - GO OWLS, **career and life planning, resume writing, goal setting** for internships and job placement, **joining student organizations** like toast masters, **improving social engagement and presentation skills**, etc.

Scholars start to give back in their second year by spreading the word at their high school, serving as peer mentors etc.

NOW ALL OF THIS WHEN THESE STUDENTS WILL GRADUATE IN FOUR YEARS WITH ZERO DEBT IS SOMETHING SPECIAL!!

Excellent intern programs will be provided. Real summer jobs at companies that embrace Best Practices combined with an excellent organizational culture. This is excellent on the job training that will help these students immensely.

This program is especially meaningful to me. I was a First In Family university student. Our whole team is driven to ensure that these young students are competing on a level playing field and have a fair chance to succeed. We can only do this with your help and support.

Please read our Concept Paper. If you like what you see, the FAU Team would love to meet with you, as **we will need major funding to achieve our goals.**

I am also pleased to announce that the Boca West Children's Foundation has agreed to include our Emerging Scholars Program on their platform. They have pledged \$50,000 per year for four years for a total of \$200,000 to educate four students in our program. Arthur Adler and Howard Boilen, thank you.

Thanks for attending this event. I wish you all a happy holiday season and a healthy New Year.