

## **Selected Highlights Since 2018 from our Team – Board, Administrators, Faculty, Staff, Students, Alumni and Friends**

1. First and foremost, I want to thank Karen. She is an alum too and cares deeply about this University and has worked hard to advance it.
2. We renewed our focus on enrollment and retention and have held our numbers firm during the past five years, including a record Freshman class for Fall 2023 and the 4<sup>th</sup> largest Freshman class for Fall 2024, among other enrollment successes.
3. We ensured Access and Affordability for our students and families – a cornerstone of my personal beliefs and actions as President. We are a nationally-recognized best value receiving record rankings in this area. We have awarded record amounts of scholarships and need-based aid in recent years.
4. Academic Quality – we have advanced many new initiatives, received our highest third-party rankings ever for academic quality and are recognized as one of the best values in higher education – noting quality and affordability. Our faculty, staff, Board and administrators are moving us forward.
5. We advanced the Institute of Engineering to the School of Engineering and enhanced investments and programs along with the necessary governmental work to build a new \$45.5 million School of Nursing and Health Professions building – one of the greatest areas of pride during my time in this role.
  - a. We had a record 2024 Legislative Session:
    - i. We began the process of establishing a School of Veterinary Medicine and will be building a new \$60 million Veterinary Sciences building.
    - ii. Secured an appropriation of \$38 million for a new Learning Commons/Residence Hall and;
    - iii. Funding of \$10 million to enhance our Cybersecurity and Network Management program and related facilities.
    - iv. And, an appropriation of \$47 million for additional deferred maintenance and campus improvement funds.
    - v. Started the process with our partner, the University of Louisville, to establish a medical school satellite location on our campus.
    - vi. We are very grateful to our legislative team and our legislators for their support, especially our local and regional legislators.
6. Enhancing Racer Athletics – we have had record years and advanced ourselves to the Missouri Valley Conference and the Missouri Valley Football Conference in order to bring a new and enhanced prestige to Murray State University. We had record fundraising and sponsorship years due to the generosity of our hundreds of alumni and friends.
7. We entered into an agreement with Sodexo and brought new, national dining options to our campus community and we contracted with SSC Services to enhance our grounds and custodial work. Campus has never looked better.
8. We weathered a 100-year pandemic with very difficult years of hourly and daily pivots and decision-making where no playbook existed and due to an excellent team, we passed with flying colors. We developed a comprehensive plan and moved forward. Always forward. And, we weathered this terrible period with no major adverse financial events, no layoffs or furloughs, no cuts in pay or benefits and we are better and stronger today.

9. As Chair of the Council of University Presidents for the past several years, we worked with Dr. Aaron Thompson, Council on Postsecondary Education President, and the other university Presidents and legislators to appropriate millions of dollars to our campuses for asset preservation, deferred maintenance, new facilities and campus improvements, coupled with a \$12 million bond issue at Murray State University to assist in this work and enhancing the Performance Funding Model, among other items.
10. We celebrated our Centennial in a record manner and documented our 100-year history with a new book, *The Finest Place We Know*.
11. We restored Lovett Auditorium, Wrather Hall, created Woods Park, completed important work on Wilson and Wells Halls and improved the Curriss Center. We have projects underway in Doyle Fine Arts, Old Fine Arts, Mason Hall, Oakley Applied Science, to advance the Hutson School of Agriculture and enhancing the William "Bill" Cherry Exposition Center, among other important work and campus improvements.
12. We developed a new Strategic Plan and made many positive changes to personnel, programs and priorities and successfully addressed our Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges ten-year reaffirmation.
13. Received approvals for new student housing, developed a new Campus Master Plan and acquired Station 74 apartments to enhance our housing options and replace College Courts.
14. We added permanent bronze artwork to campus, Racer One and Dr. John W. Carr statues, with the support of generous donors, to remind everyone of our important history.
15. We realized record fundraising years and launched a \$100 million Centennial Campaign – *Be Bold: Forever Blue and Gold*. We stand at over \$90 million toward this goal today. This could not have been accomplished without the thousands of alumni and friends who generously support Murray State University – I am forever grateful to these individuals.

I am very proud of what we have accomplished as a **team** and again, as I have stated often, *our best days remain in front of us*. Go Racers!