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MCLA Science Center Name Revealed at Ribbon Cutting

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Important	Interesting	Funny	Awesome	Infuriating	Ridiculous

Gov. Deval Patrick and many other excited officials and MCLA members cut the ribbon at the Feigenbaum Center for Science and Innovation.

NORTH ADAMS, Mass. — Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts President Mary Grant announced a "transformational gift" of $5 million from Feigenbaum Foundation to an ecstatic crowd that packed the science center's lobby on Friday afternoon.

Moments later, the sign with the new namesake of the recently constructed building and the first new building at MCLA in 40 years was revealed — Feigenbaum Center for Science and Innovation.

"With support from the Feigenbaum Foundation we will support excellence in learning and teaching at MCLA, the advancement of research on innovation and leadership at the college amd throughout the Berkshires that the Feigenbaums held so dear," Grant said.

Emil George, president of the Feigenbaum Foundation, explained the foundation was established to improve the quality of life particularly for those institutions in Berkshire County with an emphasis on education, science, technology and management.

George said this was the first major donation since the passing of Donald Feigenbaum and the retirement of his brother, Armand.

The Feigenbaum brothers, experts in total quality management, were known as philanthropists, most notably donating more than $1 million to renovate the Berkshire Museum, which opened the Feigenbaum Hall of Innovation in their honor.

He also credited his friend and adviser Bud Riley, who died on Aug. 18, just three days after completing the paperwork to finalize the agreement, for spearheading the gift and naming the science center. In his honor, $20,000 worth of scholarships in memory of Bernard E. Bud Riley will be awarded annually.

"Within weeks after Donald's death, I had a meeting at Bud's house," George said. "And we were discussing the mission statement and what the brothers would've wanted, and Bud said, 'You know, when it comes to this area of education, technology and sciences, I really would like to do something for MCLA' just out of the blue."

Many local officials attended the ceremony, including Gov. Deval Patrick.

Patrick described the center as a "gorgeous building" that he hoped he could tour when there weren't quite so many people around.

President Mary Grant spoke to a packed lobby on Friday afternoon.

Constrasting the opening as a step forward for the state, even as the federal government is stalled, he said the center was "important for North Adams, for Berkshire County, for Western Massachusetts, for the whole region, and the whole commonwealth.

"Why? Because growth will come from a blend of education, innovation and infrastructure pursued with

discipline. ... It's a winning strategy through history and it will make a difference here today and tomorrow."

Department of Higher Education Commissioner Richard Freeland said the building shows a strong commitment to the state's youth.

"I don't think [you light] a fire more among a young person than adults saying, 'You matter, you're important, your work matters and we're willing to put money on the table.' That's what this building says to this community and the young people who come here and the people who teach and work here," Freeland said, speaking with Carole Cornelison, commissioner of the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance.

Ann Billetz, chairman of the science department, was excited that all of the sciences are under the same roof for the first time.

"When we moved into this building, it was really like moving home," Billetz said, also noting how the science departments were involved in the process and were able to provide input along the way.

MCLA senior and psychology major Asia Andrews spoke of her excitement as well.

"My peers and I have the opportunity to enhance our learning both in and out of the classroom because of the resources available to us in this building," Andrews said.

Both Andrews and Billetz appreciated the new labs, classrooms, lounges and study areas.

The county's delegation had strong attendence, with Rep. Gailanne Cariddi, D-North Adams, Rep. Tricia Farley-Bouvier, D-Pittsfield, and Rep. William "Smitty" Pignatelli, D-Lenox, on hand. In addition, Sen. Benjamin Downing attended. Grant also thanked past representatives and school officials who had made the project possible, particularly former state Rep. Daniel E. Bosley.

"Aren't we all excited?" Cariddi asked giddily. "This is just not the newest project of the commonwealth, but it's the finest example of a project that the Legislature and government working with higher education to benefit the students who come here and will go through this building and go be educated to go work with businesses that need to have the people who come through these doors."

The county's two mayors also attended. Mayor Richard Alcombright and Pittsfield Mayor Daniel Bianchi stressed the importance of the center as a regional asset to science education.

"As a significant part of [Mary Grant's] efforts, she was passionate that this place does not only provide a state-of-the-art learning environment for her students, but also a facility that would become a regional STEM resource center for the community and for our K-7 educators and our students," Alcombright said.

The $40 million building was funded through $54.5 million in capital funds from the governor's 2008 Higher Education Bond Bill and $1.7 million from MCLA; the college next looks to use those funds to begin renovations of Bowman Hall. The center's groundbreaking took place on a similarly drizzly Friday two years ago and was opened to students at the beginning of this semester.