

Thanks for an Extraordinary 10 Years!

By President David Hodge

As Valerie and I look to retirement, we find ourselves reflecting on all the people we have gotten to know who make Miami exceptional and have made our time at Miami so special.

When I run with students in the early morning (6 a.m.!), we always stop at the seal, look at the lighted cupola over Upham, and I ask, “What’s special about Miami for you?”

Their first response is almost always professors, and then friends. For some reason, I rarely hear, “The president!”

I couldn’t agree more with their choice, though. Faculty are the heart of a university. Our faculty are extremely accomplished in their teaching and scholarship. More than that, they share a deep commitment to Miami and to our students that is simply remarkable.

Similarly, our staff are amazing in the dedication and spirit they bring to their responsibilities and to the lives of our students. From the first day Valerie,

Meriem, and I arrived, we’ve been overwhelmed by the pride that everyone has in Miami and in what they contribute to the university’s success.

Over the 10 years, Valerie and I spent significant time traveling around Ohio and the country meeting with alums who shared countless wonderful stories of how Miami impacted their lives — and still does. Their enthusiasm for their alma mater is infectious and inspiring, and their generosity to Miami has made a significant and lasting difference in the opportunities that the next generations of Miami students will enjoy.

Every August, we welcomed a new class of students who arrived both excited and nervous to continue Miami’s legacy. Watching and participating in their development over their four years here has been a great joy, and their ingenuity and accomplishments — and eagerness to tackle their futures head on — have

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Valerie and David Hodge in front of MacCracken Hall.

been an endless source of pride over our 10 years (not to mention quite a few broomball victories!).

Despite the rise of negativity and cynicism in the world around us, or perhaps because of it, Miami continues to encourage our students to be idealistic and innovative, to keep believing that anything — everything — is possible. We continually seek to attract and support students who have that fire in their belly that will spur them to seek and accomplish great things.

That’s why a liberal education is so important. We educate our students for the long haul. By fostering and encouraging a sense of curiosity, critical thinking, creativity, and the ability to communicate about a wide range of issues with a wide range of people, we prepare our students to be well-rounded individuals and citizens. Their liberal education will provide growth and opportunity throughout their lives. It is part of what makes a Miami education so special.

Most of you had four years to learn to love Miami — Valerie and I have had 10. Imagine how we feel as we prepare to say goodbye to everything and everyone we’ve grown to love. We’ve enjoyed an extraordinary time with phenomenal people, and for that, Valerie and I thank you with all our hearts.

Love and Honor.