

## **Premier Gordon Campbell**

Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, the official opening

April 11, 2008

*Check against delivery*

Thank you Peter.

And let me start by saying how pleased I am to be here in the traditional territories of the Musqueam First Nation; thank you Mary, for the blessing for all of us.

It's a real pleasure to be here today with my colleague Murray Coell and Richard Lee, but really with Brad Bennett and representatives of the board and Stephen Toope, great leader of the University of British Columbia.

But most importantly I want to tell you the straight goods here. I'm most pleased to be here with Ike and Jean Barber to say thank you for all that they've done for us.

You know, it's been said that great cities need great universities. Great provinces need great universities. What you need is also to make those universities work, we need great libraries, we need a culture of learning and we need great leaders who help show us the way to building the kind of educational infrastructure that's so critical to the long-term future of our province and of our lives, of the quality of life that we all lead.

I've been fortunate to know Ike Barber, who I now have to call Dr. Irving K. Barber all the time. I've been fortunate to know Dr. Irving K. Barber for a number of years, and the great thing about Ike is, he never has lost track of what the province has given to him, and he's shown his appreciation for that by constantly, consistently and relentlessly giving back to us.

There are few things that you can do that give more to the future of a province than investing in learning.

The Irving K. Barber Scholarship Fund, British Columbia Scholarship Fund, is touching 162 students every single year, where we provide them with \$5,000 of support to pursue their goals, their interests, and their dreams. The I.K. Barber Enhanced Forestry Laboratory at UNBC, the Irving K. Barber Chair in Diabetes Research at UBC, the Ike Barber Human Islet Transplant Laboratory at the Vancouver Hospital in partnership with UBC.

Time after time after time, Ike Barber has seen a future that you can build with a strong educational institution and he has responded to the call with a generosity not just of spirit but of financial contribution that is unmatched.

And I want to say thank you for Ike. Thank you for all you've done.

And what an incredible place we are sitting in today. We are celebrating the opening of this incredible Ike Barber Learning Centre. You know, libraries, Peter was telling me earlier, that libraries are some of the oldest buildings that we have. They are a type of building, because of what takes place, I would suggest,

within them that creates a kind of connection. It's critical. It's a connection from the past but it's a way to build the kind of future that we all envision for ourselves.

It is within these walls that a student, or a group of students will imagine a future that they can create and will start the first steps of their journey to building an even stronger quality of life that all of us will share in. It is within these walls that we have found a way of creating a network of learning that stretches across the province, to each corner of this province, to each person, to each imagination, to each individual; and we say to them: here is some power that you can take to create the kind of world that you want to live in.

This is a building. But the only part of this building that's important is the people that are in it. We have new technologies here. Some of the first robotic library storage units that we've had, they're here to meet the needs of those students, to help satisfy and quench the thirst for knowledge that so many, so many thousands of people will have when they come within these walls, beneath this ceiling.

And as I stand here today with you and I feel this place, there are a number of things that I noticed like, that I hope that you noticed as well.

The first thing I noticed when I came in here was there was some wood on the walls! Now if you know like, you know there had to be wood in this building. It's one of the most environmentally sound building materials that we have, but it reflects our province and reminds us of what our province is and the benefits that we have.

The second thing I felt, even as I walked in, in spite of the fact this building has only been here for a little while, is the energy of the students. It's one of the amazing things when you come here. You see people, and they're typing away at their keyboards and they're looking at their computers. But you know there's something else that happens. There's the sort of a, a spirit of learning and inquiry and you can almost – it's almost palpable. You can almost feel it.

That's what a library does.

A library is a centre for learning. It's a centre for individuals. It's a centre for research. It's a centre for discovery. It's a place where explorations take place and who knows what people may find. But, like Barber, through this Learning Centre, is opening up worlds of opportunities for people here... right here, in the University of British Columbia, and across our province.

UBC today, this year, is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Since 1908 it has been a place where people in British Columbia have turned to for information, for learning, and for the quest for knowledge.

The like K. Barber Learning Centre creates a library. It builds on the library, on the history and traditions of the UBC library here, and builds on those traditions for the future.

It was mentioned by Peter that we started this - actually like and Martha started this long before this – but we announced this about five years ago. We are now five years in and we have an incredible building, a building that reflects and

respects the future of the institution of the library itself. A building where the designers thought to themselves, how do we bring the outside world in, how do we make this a place of light as well as a place of learning? A building where each of the craftsmen and each of the tradesmen took special interest in this special project that is taking the past and wedding it to the future in a way that will touch the lives of people that we may never know.

And on behalf of all the people of British Columbia, Ike, let me say to you and to Jean and to your family, but particularly to you and Jean: thank you for your generosity, thank you for your vision, thank you for building an even better British Columbia today, but what will be a truly exceptional British Columbia for years and years to come. Thank you for this generational gift.

It will make a huge difference in thousands of people's lives. Thank you.