

On-Campus Stadium Groundbreaking

Remarks Delivered by USF President Rhea Law

Friday, November 8, 2024

As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Will. Your steadfast vision and support for this project have been truly inspiring and instrumental in driving our success.

It fills me with immense pride to see so many members of our USF Bulls community joining us here today. Can I get a “Go Bulls?”

That was excellent, thank you! I’d like to recognize the many elected officials who have joined us for this historic occasion.

- Florida Attorney General, Ashley Moody
- Florida Commissioner of Agriculture, Wilton Simpson
- Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, Paul Renner
- Florida Senators:
 - USF Alum, Danny Burgess
 - Jay Collins
 - Ed Hooper; and
 - Darryl Rouson
- Florida Representatives:
 - Danny Alvarez
 - USF Alum, Jennifer Canady
 - Leader Fentrice Driskell
 - USF Alum, Karen Gonzalez-Pittman
 - Berny Jacques
 - Lawrence McClure; and

- USF Alum, Kevin Steele
- Department of Business & Professional Regulation Secretary, Melanie Griffin
- City of Tampa Mayor, Jane Castor
- City of Temple Terrace Mayor, Andrew Ross
- Hillsborough County Commissioners:
 - Harry Cohen
 - Ken Hagan
 - Gwen Meyers
 - Joshua Wostal
- Hillsborough County Administrators:
 - Bonnie Wise
 - Greg Horwedel
- Tampa City Council Members:
 - Alan Clendenin
 - Gwen Henderson
- Temple Terrace City Council Member, Gil Schisler

Also here today are those representing the offices of:

- U.S. Senator Marco Rubio
- Congressman Vern Buchanan
- Congresswoman Kathy Castor
- Congresswoman Laurel Lee
- Senate President Kathleen Passidomo

- Representative Mike Beltran; and
- Representative Linda Chaney

And former elected officials:

- The honorable Betty Castor

We are so grateful for the unwavering support of our elected officials and thank them for their investment in our institution, which has helped with the incredible trajectory USF is on.

This project has truly been a team effort, and its success wouldn't be possible without the commitment and support of several groups across our university. I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge and thank them for their vital contributions.

Thank you to:

- The Florida Board of Governors
- The USF Board of Trustees
- The USF St. Petersburg Campus Board
- The USF Sarasota-Manatee Campus Board
- The USF Foundation Board
- and the USF Financing Corporation and its Board of Directors

I'd also like to thank Truist Bank, a longstanding partner of our university, for providing the financing for this project. Without your support, today's celebration would not have been possible.

As you may have noticed while exploring campus today, we are gathered here during one of USF's most cherished traditions — Homecoming. With our three campuses buzzing with activity and everyone coming together to

celebrate their USF pride, we knew this would be the perfect moment to break ground on our future on-campus stadium.

When I am out in the community, one of the topics I hear about most often from our supporters is their excitement for this transformational facility.

The on-campus stadium will greatly enhance the USF student experience and provide a compelling reason for Bulls fans far and wide to visit our campus and engage with our university.

It will provide an opportunity for our passionate alumni and their families to return to campus, share their Bull pride, and see how much our campus has evolved throughout the years. As a proud USF alumna, I know firsthand how profoundly impactful moments like these are, as they allow us to forge an even stronger bond with our alma mater.

The stadium will also serve as a destination venue for our region and city by hosting all kinds of events — USF football, of course... but also women's lacrosse — our newest sports team that will play their debut game in February — as well as concerts, festivals, and other events that bring our community together.

By welcoming tens of thousands of people to campus for games and events, the stadium will create new opportunities to build lifelong connections to USF, allowing even more people to experience everything our great university has to offer.

As Chair Weatherford mentioned, we have already seen tremendous successes in other parts of our university — such as admissions, research funding, and philanthropic giving.

At the same time, we have seen many universities across the country be successful in both academics and athletics. There is no reason we can't do the same.

This visionary project will lift USF to new heights, creating a brighter future for our university, our students, and the entire Tampa Bay region — and we are thankful you all could join us here today as we create history together and embark on this bold new era.

Now, please join me in welcoming USF Vice President for Athletics, Michael Kelly, to say a few words.