

Maine Maritime Academy  
ABS Center Dedication Ceremony  
Dr. William J. Brennan  
Castine, Maine  
May 1, 2015

We are here today to dedicate the ABS Center for Engineering, Science and Research, and to celebrate the significant work and contributions that went into making this building a reality. Thank you all for coming!

The building is the culmination of more than 6 years of planning, fundraising, and construction. Its completion is likely one of the most important initiatives MMA has accomplished in this decade. This is the first new academic building to be constructed on our campus in over 30 years, and it now houses the heart of our academic programs: classroom learning, joint student/faculty capstone projects, student and faculty studies, and worldwide industry-relevant research.

MMA faculty and students are increasingly engaged in cutting-edge research on wave and tidal energy technologies, on the development of clean fuel alternatives for marine industries, on offshore wind energy and the potential to harness thermoelectric power from waste heat. They are exploring the cross-cultural training needs in international business and logistics and examining crew safety requirements and anti-piracy initiatives. They are studying nutrient flow and ecosystem health in diverse maritime habitats and developing cost-effective marine wetland monitoring programs for our national park system. MMA is well positioned to help businesses, agencies and organizations comply with increasingly stringent US and global regulations and standards, increase their efficiencies, improve environmental stewardship, and develop new technologies.

The ABS Center will provide students and faculty with the modern labs and research spaces that they require to support this work, enhance our applied science program, and strengthen MMA's reputation.

In 1941, when Maine Maritime Academy was established, we took over the buildings of the old Eastern States Normal School. Over the years as we have expanded and evolved our programs, we have adapted these 1860s vintage buildings to our contemporary needs, and we are proud of what has been accomplished. However, advancements in engineering, science and research require us to have contemporary teaching and laboratory facilities so that we can prepare young men and women for successful careers.

Before I introduce other important guests up here with me, I'd like to draw your attention to the reason that Maine Maritime Academy exists – namely our students. They are the sole reason that we are here today and the reason why so many people dedicated themselves to this project.

Later in our program you will hear from some of them; Keenan Eaton, in his last year of our advanced systems major, was here to help with the initial planning phase; Eliza Pingree, who graduates tomorrow, and who has been our student trustee this past year helping her colleagues

on the board fully appreciate the value of this new building; and, Edison Ma, a freshman who represents those students of the future who will benefit from all that has been contributed by those who came before him. Will the three of you please stand and be recognized as representatives of all Maine Maritime Academy students past, present and future.

Constructing a building takes years of planning, dedication, and implementation. This amazing new building would not be here without input from students like the three I just mentioned, as well as our faculty, Board members, alumni and many, many contributions and pledges from those who believe in our mission.

The Academy's Board of Trustees—including a number of our alumni—not only recognized the need for a new facility, but they also worked tirelessly on this project for several years, and I would like to thank Robert Peacock, Chair of the Board of Trustees, for his strong leadership and dedication.

Another essential part of the construction process was raising \$14 million dollars to design, plan, and build the ABS Center. Without funding, we wouldn't be here today. Indeed, there were a number of obstacles along the way, but I was always encouraged by the support we received from so many individuals, foundations, and institutions and, especially, the people of the State of Maine who supported us at the ballot box.

I'd like to acknowledge one person in particular in this regard, Bill Haggett, a former member and Chair of our Board, who served as the chairman of the capital campaign and had the laboring oar in raising the funds necessary to make the building a reality.

Several years ago, we initiated a fundraising campaign to seek charitable contributions to help construct the new building. The American Bureau of Shipping was the college's first partner in this campaign, donating \$2.5 million for the building, and contributing an additional \$600,000 to support applied research at MMA.

Robert Somerville, Former Chairman of ABS and MMA's Board Vice-Chair, was instrumental in securing these gifts, the largest corporate gifts in MMA history. We are very pleased to welcome Bob here today to join in the dedication ceremony.

And, to further memorialize just how important ABS is to MMA, I am pleased to also recognize Mr. Chris Wiernicki, who is currently the Chairman, President and CEO of ABS, and he will be delivering the Commencement Address to the Class of 2015 tomorrow.

The American Bureau of Shipping is committed to setting standards for safety and excellence as one of the world's leading ship classification societies, and employs many of our graduates around the world. Not only has ABS been critical to the construction of this building and the programs to be housed in it, but ABS has also been a major contributor throughout the years, providing very generous and much needed scholarships to our students.

Critical to the construction funding was a state-wide bond question on the November ballot in 2013. The ballot question asked the people of the State of Maine to favor a bond in the amount of \$4.5 million-dollars to assist in the construction of the new facility. This proved to be a very

successful public – private partnership and we have Representative Kenneth Fredette to thank for the foresight and initiative, and especially for his long-time support of the Academy.

The quality of the building will be evident as you tour it later this afternoon. But I want to bring attention to Karl Ward, the President and CEO of Nickerson and O’Day, the company that built this wonderful facility, and to thank Karl and his crew for their dedication to detail.

And in this regard, I would also like to acknowledge Ben Beaulieu, of the Cianbro Corporation, who represented the Academy during the construction phase and to thank him and his company for their support.

Lastly, but frankly of perhaps paramount importance, I want to acknowledge and thank the design architects and engineers of Harriman Associates, including Rob Kliendiest and especially Mark Lee. Their design is beautiful and functional and perfectly attuned to this campus at this time in its history. They understood our program and our needs and they became an extended member of the family as we moved forward to develop the project. I have truly enjoyed working with them and thank them for their vision.

There are a number of other people who I would like to acknowledge as well including Bill Walsh, a former member of our Board, whose knowledge of construction and the design-build process helped us to focus on the essentials and to ensure that our plans were realistic and appropriately scaled to meet our needs. His technical support as well as his financial support through his company Ocean Properties, made the difference in many ways.

Many individuals, foundations and institutions contributed financial support for this building. I’ve mentioned ABS and the people of Maine, but I would also like to publicly thank Kitt Watson for his incredible generosity, Scott Searway, a 1966 graduate of the Academy for his ongoing support of his alma mater, and two other graduates, Jason Oney and Dan Hobart for their generous support through their company, Strategic Maintenance Solutions.

In addition, I want to thank the Harold Alfond Foundation for their inspirational gift that not only enabled the completion of the building, but will also support students who will use this building for many years to come. And the Davis Family Foundation and the Libra Foundation for their recognition of the value of Maine Maritime Academy to the State of Maine.

I would also like to reinforce comments I made at the outset about our students, faculty and staff. They contributed in a number of ways and not just financially, but also during the critical planning, design and execution phases. MMA people like Carlton Hooper, whose knowledge of the college’s infrastructure, was essential to the architects and engineers.

And the people of the Town of Castine deserve an expression of our appreciation for bearing with us during the construction phase and in particular, I’d like to thank George Motycka for consistently bringing forward helpful solutions to problems during both planning and execution of the project.

You’ll see listed in the event program individuals, companies, foundations, institutions and hundreds of other donors who contributed, or pledged to donate to this building, and who made a vision become reality. I was here as just a guest on campus six years ago when my predecessor,

President Len Tyler and others formally announced the campaign to build the first new classroom building on the Maine Maritime Academy campus in over 30 years.

It seems like ages ago now, but it gives me a great sense of pride and personal satisfaction as a member of the Maine Maritime Academy family to stand before this wonderful new building, the ABS Center for Engineering, Science and research and say thank you all for supporting this project, and for believing in the mission of Maine Maritime Academy.

And now, I would like to welcome Robert Somerville, Vice Chair of our Board of Trustees, to say a few words.