

Good evening! Thank you for that warm introduction.

Tonight is a time for celebration –an opportunity to honor the many achievements of the Butler Center community. Though building a diverse, inclusive, and equitable community can sometimes be uncomfortable and challenging work, the dedication and resilience of everyone in this room continue to drive the college toward our mission.

I am grateful to have this opportunity to celebrate your contributions to Colorado College.

In order to truly be an equitable community, it is important that we tell inclusive narratives of the past and present. Tonight, we have the opportunity to connect the past to the present, as we highlight the profound positive impact that our minoritized students, staff, and faculty have had on the college throughout its history.

Let's start our celebration by recognizing the contributions of Mr. Ellis Ulysses Butler, Jr., whose commitment, vision, and generosity enabled the Butler Center to grow into the hub of diversity and inclusion that brings us all together tonight.

Ellis U. Butler, Jr. was one of the earliest African-American students to attend Colorado College, graduating magna cum laude in 1940 with a degree in physics. In 1971, at the passing of his wife, Ora Brandon Butler, Mr. Butler began making an annual gift to the college in her name. He had conflicted feelings for CC, writing a moving letter accompanying his initial gift that highlighted "certain unpleasant experiences I went through as a student" at CC. However, after assessing his entire experience, especially the benefits of his education, Mr. Butler was eventually able to reconcile his time at CC and his relationship with CC moved to a place of gratitude and forgiveness.

When Mr. Butler passed away in 2009, he left the college \$150,000. His gift was honored with the establishment of the Ellis Ulysses Butler, Jr. Center for Intercultural Leadership at Lennox Hall. In the fall of 2014, as a key initiative of the college's strategic plan, we committed to creating and building a prominent organization to bring together in one place the work of diversity, inclusion, intercultural exchange, equity, and empowerment for the Colorado College community. As a result, it seemed so appropriate to centralize the Office of Minority and International Students (OMIS) and other offices on campus under a new Butler Center paradigm.

In just four years, the Butler Center has quickly become what we hoped it would - leading us toward a more inclusive and stronger Colorado College. That would not have been possible without the foundational leadership role that Dr. Paul Buckley has played as the inaugural director of the Butler Center and assistant vice president of the college. We are fortunate to have a leader as engaged, insightful, and dynamic as Dr. Buckley. Tonight, we celebrate his leadership and the many contributions of the dedicated Butler Center staff – Associate Director Pearl Leonard Rock and Liliana Delman, Nikkita McPherson, and Michelle Stallings.

Would you all please stand so we can share our appreciation?

History is too often shaped by privilege and dominant narratives.

We would be remiss if we didn't acknowledge that our college history starts in a place and time, *before* the founding of the city of Colorado Springs, but *after* the Ute people called this region home; and other nations enjoyed its beauty before it became the backdrop to our sense of place.

It is crucial that we think critically about *how* we tell CC's history, so as not to risk erasure of marginalized voices. We cannot ignore the fact that CC has historically been a predominantly white institution. Yet, it is also essential that we recognize the important--and too often invisible—role that our communities of color have played in the college's history.

In addition to Mr. Butler's gift and legacy, I'd like to highlight a few more examples of the countless contributions of people of color and marginalized students to Colorado College's past and present.

In 1905, black students Frederick Roberts and Charles Jackson broke the color line in Colorado intercollegiate athletics when they played on the undefeated 1905 football team. After graduating in 1906, MR. Roberts went on to found an African-American newspaper in Colorado Springs called *The Light*. In 1918, he moved to Los Angeles, and became the first African-American elected to the California State Legislature. During his 16 years in office, Mr. Roberts sponsored legislation to establish the University of California, Los Angeles and proposed civil rights measures. As some of you may know, one of our East Campus residences was dedicated to Frederick Roberts this past October.

International students have long played an important role in the college's history. In 1893, Taizo Nakashima, from Japan, became the first international student to graduate from CC. In 1943, an international student program was established in cooperation with the Institute of International Education. CC's fraternities—and later sororities—provided room and board for the international students. Then, in 1954, the Foreign Student Program emerged to “help promote a better understanding between the United States and other countries of the world.” Two refugees from the Hungarian Revolution, Paul Szilagy (sz-la-ge) and Lazlo Torma, enrolled at the college under the sponsorship of the Foreign Student Program in 1957.

The CC community was actively involved in the Civil Rights Movement throughout the 60s. In 1963, several students and faculty participated in a demonstration at The Colorado Springs City Hall to protest the death of four black girls in the bombing of a church in Birmingham, Alabama. In 1965, over 500 CC students and faculty organized a March for Selma to City Hall. Also that year, Terry Fonville, Class of 1965, became the first black student to serve in student government.

Students' civil rights activism throughout the 60s was effective, with the faculty adopting an anti-discrimination statement in 1965 and a Student-Faculty Committee on Minority Rights forming in 1969 to address enrollment of underrepresented groups.

In 1971, CC students founded the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano Aztlan (or MEChA). Seeking to educate, establish pride and identity in Chicano heritage, MEChA's mission of empowerment and cultural reclamation was taken under the umbrella of SOMOS in 1999.

In 1972, the Black Student Union was founded. Also that year, the college hired its first black full-time faculty member, Clarence Sterne, Jr. In 1980, BSU sponsored the first annual black awareness week.

The charter of the Gay Liberation Front at CC was vetoed by President Lloyd Worner in 1972, though in 1988 sexual orientation was added to CC's anti-discrimination policy and in 1990, the Bisexual, Gay, and Lesbian Alliance was founded.

In 1991, the Native American Student Association—now known as the Native American Student Union—became a chartered student organization.

That year, the association sponsored the first annual Native American Heritage Week and Pow-Wow. Also in 1991, the Asian American Student Union and Minority Association of Pre-Health Students were founded.

In 1993, Kathryn Mohrman became CC's first female president. Under her leadership, the college's first Diversity Council was created in 1994, Women's Studies was recognized as a major, and the Summer Bridge Program was inaugurated in 1999.

I also want to recognize a few figures here with us tonight, who joined CC in the 90s, and have since played an integral role in building a more diverse and inclusive campus. In 1990, the Office of Minority Student Life was founded, headed by Rochelle Mason, alumna of the Class of 1983. Rochelle continued to direct the office—which in 2007 transitioned to the Office of Minority and International Students (OMIS)—until her appointment as a dean of the college in 2009.

In 1991, Mike Edmonds joined CC as the dean of students, transitioning in 2005 into his current role as Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Life.

As I'm sure you all know from personal experience, Dean Mason and Dean Edmonds are some of our most dedicated, thoughtful, and engaged campus leaders. Along with Dr. Buckley, they've played a vital role in bringing CC's vision of diversity and inclusion to fruition.

Deans Edmonds and Mason, could you please stand so we can recognize your many, many contributions to CC?

Professor Claire Garcia has also served in a variety of roles at CC since 1990, including as an English professor, chair of the Minority Concerns Committee, Feminist and Gender Studies professor, English Department Chair, and Director of the Race, Ethnicity, and Migration Studies Program. Thanks to Professor Garcia, and our many other faculty and staff of color who have served the college for 25 or more years, including: Mario Montano, Rory Stadler, Ralph Bertrand, Phil Apodaca, Vibha Kapuria-Foreman, Juan Lindau, Clara Lomas, Brenda Soto, Ted Castaneda, and Doug Monroy.

This list – of the faculty and staff of color who have been at CC for 25 or more years - is too short but we have made great progress in more recent years in hiring faculty and staff from underrepresented groups.



In fact, Dean Sandi Wong received this year's Victor Nelson-Cisneros Diversity and Inclusion Award in recognition of her efforts to diversify our faculty and keep inclusion central to academic excellence. Since Fall 2012, Dean Wong has helped to hire 53 tenure-track professors, 33 of whom were women and 22 (42%) of whom identify as people of color.

The contributions of our faculty and staff of marginalized groups are above and beyond – we ask so much of them. Would all of our faculty and staff of color and those of our Queer Community please stand so we can thank you for your support of students and the work of the Butler Center?

I'd also like to highlight a few of the contributions of our seniors of color. Several of our graduating students of color have provided narratives of their contributions to the college, so I'll share just a few examples.

Senior Atiya Harvey began leading Outdoor Education trips for students of color only, with the goal of making outdoor recreation at CC more accessible and inclusive.

She writes, “With what I’ve created and asked for the OEC is far more inclusive now than my freshman year and there are now many students of color who want to become leaders so they can lead trips for students of color when I’m gone.” Next year, Atiya will become a Resident Teacher for the organization Urban Teachers while also earning an MA in education from Johns Hopkins.

Shiyong Cheng was the first ESL student to serve both on the *Catalyst* editorial board and as a Writing Center Peer Tutor. She writes, “In the past three years, I have actively shared my experience to help other Writing Center tutors understand the cultural and language barriers in academics and how to better assist international students.” Shiyong also writes for *Asia Times Online* in her free time and will continue pursuing her journalism career working for the *Wall Street Journal* after graduation.

Trevon Newmann has made many contributions to dance at CC, including founding a group to introduce students of color and queer students to exploring movement and creating their own relationship to dance at CC.

Tre writes, “Through my own dance performances I have consistently made art for social change while self-reflecting on what I am personally experiencing and exploring, then urging those who work with me to do the same. My first dance was a response to the black lives matter movement and since then many other students have used dance workshop to make direct personal and political statements and stances on stage.” Tre will join Teach for America after graduation.

When Alison Baird joined Honor Council as a first-year, she found that the space and the discussions tended to be dominated by white, male poli-sci and philosophy majors. Over the past few years, she has worked to make Honor Council a more accessible and inclusive space. Alison notes that she “tried to increase the positivity and good vibes in order to cultivate a more enjoyable space where everyone feels included and comfortable speaking up – as well as appreciative of each other’s ideas and company!”

Audriana Alvarado has made many contributions to SOMOS as an active member and former co-chair. Following the racist Yik Yak posts that had an extremely negative impact on campus, particularly on marginalized students, Audriana co-facilitated a large gathering of all students impacted to hold a conversation about the incident.

She also conducted research in Lima, Peru on food accessibility and distribution through a Venture Grant and Anthropology Research Grant. Audriana traveled alongside Brianna Apodaca, who was also conducting research on religion and food in Peru.

Brianna has also elevated the dialogue around diversity and inclusion at CC through her involvement in SOMOS and NASU, as well as her work as a Butler Center intern. She writes of her experience: “Becoming an intern for The Butler Center my junior year equipped me with the appropriate tools to act and to help have these challenging conversations around diversity, equity, and inclusion not only at our institution, but relating to issues happening in the greater Colorado Springs community and the greater world around us. This position helped me realize I was at Colorado College for a greater purpose, that I belonged there just as much as anyone else, and that I needed to spread positive messages while being transparent about issues that students of color, first generations students, and students that come from low-income backgrounds face at Colorado College.”

Finally, Luis Enrique Quiles (key-less) has demonstrated his commitment to diversity and inclusion through his work as a founding member of the Queer People of Color Collective.

These are just a few of the many contributions of our seniors of color – you all have achieved more than I could begin to address in this short amount of time. But, I would like to briefly recognize our graduating Butler Group co-chairs:

Madeline Murphy and Carly Merritt for GlobeMed, Will Pak for the Asian Student Union and the Korean American Student Association, Q Wu for Quest Scholars Network, Anna Regan for FemCo, Jules Randolph for EQUAL, and Madeline Wilson and Rob Balloch for LD on the DL.

I have no doubt that our seniors will continue to make an impact after they leave CC. I can't wait to watch your careers and contributions unfold in the coming years. I am already hearing exciting news about your next steps. For example, I read that senior Savannah McDaniel recently was awarded a fellowship at the Cornell Medical School as well as a year-long fellowship at the Colorado Consumer Health Initiative through PIFP. What an amazing choice! And Wynter Scott is headed to Vanderbilt University Law School to earn her JD while Onyx Bengston is off to Pittsburgh to begin work as an analyst for PNC Financial and Laurelle Kinga is going to Xavier University to earn her Master of Health Sciences Administration.

Could all of our seniors stand? Let's have a round of applause to celebrate our outstanding seniors. (applause)

I also want to highlight a few of the successes you all achieved through your Butler Groups this year:

The Asian Student Union, the Korean American Student Association, and Students for the Awareness of South Asia collaborated to present Asian Culture Night, a celebration of Pan Asian culture, unity, and community led by Louie Shi and Will Pak. The Native American Student Union hosted their annual Powwow, led by Mateo Parsons, Cristina Garcia and Zunneh-bah Martin, collaborating with members of local and out of state tribes, dancers, drummers, and vendors. The Students for the Awareness of South Asia hosted their annual Diwali Celebration, with food from local South Asian establishments, student sharing on traditions, Bollywood-style and traditional dance performances, and group dancing. The Queer Community Coalition hosted their Annual Queer Prom, led by Dereka Thomas, Breanna Conwell and Bridget Galaty. They also led "Qweek", which included various programs and events celebrating LGBTQIA+ identities and community.

The Black Student Union, led by Cam Kaplan, hosted American Novelist and Distinguished Professor of English at USC Percival Everett for a reading from his book, *I Am Not Sidney Poitier*. SOMOS, led by Karina Grande and Alex Rivas, held discussions on Euro-centric standards of beauty and the history of Latin descendants in Latin America. You also celebrated Cesar Chavez with an annual march and are planning a Quince for the graduating seniors.

Quest Bridge Scholar Network, led by Jessi Blake and Q Wu, volunteered at Edison Elementary school for the Read Across America program for the entire academic year.

Conversations on Whiteness, led by Frances Gellert and Sophia Brown, worked to develop allyship with People of Color and confront the culture and consequence of whiteness on campus and beyond. CW has started a library of books that any student can access to educate themselves about these topics.

Additionally, Butler Group representatives provided critical input to the college throughout the year.

Several of you engaged in focus groups for the Bon Appetit review process, met with Dr. Jean Twenge to explore questions of cultural difference raised in her work *iGen*, discussed transitions and how well you feel CC has prepared you for life beyond college, came out early each morning to interview candidates and provide feedback for the new Director of Campus Activities & Student Orientation position, and called for changes in the General Education requirements and improvements in the classroom climate at CC.

Let's have another round of applause for all you've accomplished this year. (applause)

Diversity and inclusion involve not only a commitment in the present but also a commitment to reconciling the past. As is apparent from the many contributions mentioned earlier, people of color have played a significant role in CC's history. Yet, I recognize that CC's history has not always been constructed in an inclusive way. This means that we have critical gaps to fill in the histories of marginalized people at CC. Though long overdue, we are committed to telling the stories of our students, alumni, faculty, and staff of color.



This summer, three students will begin working on the Peoples' History Project. The project will include interviews and profiles of alumni, trustees, and key faculty and staff, among others. The Butler Center and the Office of Communications will lead the project.

I am eager to learn more about CC's untold stories, as we begin to construct a richer and more inclusive history of the college. This project is one of many ways in which we will commemorate our community of color as we prepare to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Butler Center next year.

In just five years, the Butler Center has made tremendous strides toward our mission of co-creating a learning community that is inclusive and just. I look forward to continuing this profoundly important, albeit challenging, work in the years ahead. My commitment to this critical endeavor is steadfast.

Thank you again for all you do for CC, and for giving me this opportunity to share my gratitude with you.