

The 2008 Broad Prize for Urban Education

Announcement of Winner
Celebratory Luncheon & Keynote Address

October 14, 2008 ▪ Museum of Modern Art, New York City



**Announcement of the Winner of the
2008 Broad Prize for Urban Education**

The Museum of Modern Art, New York City

Eli Broad, Founder, The Broad Foundations

Joel Klein, Chancellor, New York City Department of Education

John Gatewood, 2004 Broad Prize Scholarship Recipient

Richard Riley, Former U.S. Secretary of Education

Rod Paige, Former U.S. Secretary of Education

Hector Gonzales, Superintendent, Brownsville Independent School District, Texas

ELI BROAD: Good morning. Welcome to the Museum of Modern Art for the announcement of the winner of the 2008 Broad Prize for Urban Education.

We're honored to have on our stage this morning two former U.S. secretaries of education, Rod Paige and Dick Riley, both of whom, by the way, are members of the Broad Prize selection jury.

Later this morning, Secretaries Paige and Riley will demonstrate, as they always have, that education is not a Democratic or Republican issue. It's an American issue. So the two of them will open the envelope announcing the winner of the Broad Prize together.

We're pleased to have with us this morning U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education Kerri Briggs, the Florida Commissioner of Education Eric Smith, Chairman of the Strong American Schools Campaign Governor Roy Romer, members of The Broad Foundation board of governors, members of The Broad Center for the Management of School Systems board of governors and other elected officials and school district leaders from around the country.

Thank you all for being here.

In the seven years we've been doing this now, we have all learned a great deal about the smart, district-wide strategies that are helping students excel, and most particularly poor and minority students. We're all proud that the \$2 million Broad Prize, which is our nation's largest education award, recognizes districts that have made the greatest gains not only in student achievement, but in closing the gap between income and ethnic groups.

Please join me in welcoming this year's finalists:

Aldine Independent School District in Texas

Broward County Public Schools in Florida

Brownsville Independent School District in Texas

Long Beach Unified School District in California

and

Miami-Dade County Public Schools in Florida

I'm now pleased to introduce the best advocate for New York City's 1.1 million students. A native New Yorker and product of the New York City schools, Joel Klein has overseen the city school system for some six years. Under his leadership, New York City did what most urban districts are currently struggling to do—narrow the chronic achievement gap for low-income, African-American and Hispanic students.

To the challenge of turning around the nation's largest school district, he brought with him his experience as chairman and CEO of one of the world's largest media companies and before that, as you know, as U.S. assistant attorney general and deputy counselor to President Bill Clinton.

JOEL KLEIN: Thank you very much. I'm going to be brief, if for no other reason than to put these people who are waiting patiently to hear the results out of their misery. I remember two years ago sitting right over there, and my mayor was right over there, and we were one of the five finalists, and unfortunately Boston won that year. So this brings back a lot of memories for me.

Eli, thank you, and on behalf of our mayor, Michael Bloomberg, I want to welcome all of you to New York City and to this exquisite Museum of Modern Art, of which you are a board member, I should point out, as well. And with all that's been going on in this city and this country and on Wall Street, I think it's entirely fitting that we're assembled here today to recognize one of the best possible fixes we can make right now to our economy, and that is to invest our time, energy and resources into improving our public schools. I submit to you there's nothing more important. I said last year when we received this award, this country will never be the country we want it to be until we get it right on education. We are still not right on education, and we should continue to make that point.

But I do have one bone to pick with you, Eli. I noticed today you got up and said this was the \$2 million Broad Prize. When we got it, it was the \$1 million Broad Prize. Now, your generosity came a year late.

But that's okay. We plan to be back here in a couple of years when we are eligible, and then we will receive the \$3 million Broad Prize, I hope.

I just want to say what a great thing that it has been for our school system. All our schools wear this banner with great pride. It's a tribute to our teachers, our principals, our kids and our entire school community that they did the work in the largest city in the United States and got this recognition. It vindicates our tough policies on accountability, on empowering our principals, our willingness to do something a lot of districts didn't do. We became the most charter-friendly school district in the United States, and we continue to innovate and pioneer with the United Federation of Teachers. We have, I think, one of the most creative pay-for-performance systems in the United States. And so all of that was validated, and so many other things—the hard work of so many great people—when we won this prize.

Now, let me be clear. In New York City, like in every other urban area, the road ahead of us is long. We still have far too many kids who are not getting the education they need and deserve.

But winning this prize last year was a real shot in the arm for our entire school system. And, again, I want to commend the Broads for focusing on public education. As I said, there is nothing more important.

Let me congratulate each of our finalists and wish each one of you well. Let's be clear. Whatever happens today, you are all winners. You are setting the pace in education in America today.

ELI BROAD: Since the prize began in 2002, we have awarded more than 700 Broad Prize Scholarships nationwide to students who, like your school districts, have shown dramatic improvement.

It's my great pleasure to be able to introduce one of those recipients, I'John Gatewood. I'John is a 2005 graduate of the Charlotte Mecklenberg School System in North Carolina,

which was a Broad Prize finalist in 2004. I'John pulled up his high school GPA from a 2.6 in his freshman year to a 4.1 in his senior year. He is now a proud senior at Clemson University in South Carolina and is looking forward to graduating next year. With the support of The Broad Prize scholarship, I'John is majoring in economics and minoring in math. You know, when I heard about his plans to get a graduate degree in economics, my first thought was: I'John, they could really use you in Washington these days.

Please join me in welcoming I'John to this stage.

I'JOHN GATEWOOD: Thank you Mr. and Mrs. Broad, Secretary Paige, Secretary Riley and distinguished guests. Growing up in a single-parent household with two older brothers and a rough financial situation, one would expect that the standard for success in my life would be relatively low. Maybe just staying out of trouble or finding a good job out of high school would have been enough to be considered an achievement.

Fortunately, my mother had higher goals for my life. She worked long nights cleaning laundromats and office buildings, wanting, hoping and praying that her own dreams deferred could be accomplished through me.

What made her upset the most was when she felt as if I was taking my taking education for granted. Early on in my high-school career, that was the case. I was a quick learner, and sometimes it bred complacency, and even laziness. She taught me that talent was not a substitute for hard work, and it should not only be used, but shared.

I took these lessons to heart. I began teaching chess to students from my former middle school on weekends, and I also began completing International Baccalaureate, as well as advanced placement courses in high school.

My hard work paid off. As a senior, I won the state chess championship for North Carolina, and my high school coursework ensured that I would enter college almost a full year ahead of my freshman class.

Despite my accomplishments, there was still a great deal of uncertainty about my future. I wasn't sure what school I wanted to go to or what I wanted to study. The only certainty was that I had a loving family and that we were broke. Financial constraints not only inhibit one's lifestyle, but also your thoughts.

The Broad Prize scholarship allowed me to dream. With the help of The Broad Foundation, I felt more confident in accepting admission to Clemson University, a school that costs over \$30,000 a year to attend. It also gave me a great sense of pride and a high academic standard to reach.

I was drawn to economics and soon became an endowed scholar, which is a merit-based award given to students who have excelled in economics at Clemson University. The award gave me an opportunity to present research on economic issues to Clemson University's board of academic advisors, which oversees course curriculum for the university.

I am currently a senior, and in May I will receive a bachelor's degree in economics with a minor in mathematical sciences. I plan to continue my education and receive a Ph.D. in economics and hope to go into teaching or public service.

The Broad Prize scholarship has helped me to imagine this dream, and to the Broad family and the foundation, I would like to thank you for the opportunity that you have given to me and my family.

ELI BROAD: It's now my pleasure to introduce the sixth and seventh U.S. secretaries of education, Dick Riley and Rod Paige. We're delighted to have the experience and wisdom of these two men on The Broad Prize jury, and we're even more honored to have them with us today.

SECRETARY RICHARD RILEY: Thank you so much, Eli and my friends.

I'm so proud of all five districts that are winners here today. All of you make us very proud.

I am especially proud of my young friend who had the good sense to go to Clemson University in South Carolina.

I am proud of Eli having his prize of Edye for over 50 years.

I am proud of my 13 grandchildren, and many of you all have heard me say that a number of times. But the grandchildren that I have remind me every day of how important it is to have this lift of learning, this lift of the mind, and also a lift of the heart to love learning and love education.

And what I see for my grandchildren, I want to see for all children in America, because all of these children are our children, and that's what these awards are all about.

Now, Rod and I understand that all of these awards events, the big ones, they have two people to give the awards. The hip thing, apparently, is to have two people. And so we have a pair of presenters today to announce the winner. So I'm pleased that our education field is hip.

SECRETARY ROD PAIGE: I think I'm up to the challenge, if you are. After The Broad Prize review board selected these five finalists, teams of researchers visited those finalists to study their policies and practices. Then it was the job of the jury to select one winner based on reams and reams of quantitative and qualitative data. You must know that from the beginning and the end of this process, it is no easy task to select one district out of 100. But given those odds, what that means is the four finalists today that are with us will still turn out better than 95 others, plus their college-bound seniors will be \$250,000 richer.

With that, we would like to extend our congratulations to all five finalists. You are all winners in our book. And now, may we have the envelope, please?

SECRETARY RICHARD RILEY: And the winner of the 2008 Broad Prize for Urban Education is...

SECRETARY ROD PAIGE: ...Brownsville Independent School District!

ELI BROAD: Congratulations, Brownsville!

Would the superintendent, school board and president of the teachers union of Brownsville please join us?

HECTOR GONZALES: What can you say? I wasn't expecting it. Thank you, Eli and Edey Broad, for your foundation. It is a great tribute to education. You are to be commended, and I want to extend my whole-hearted gratitude for everything you do for public education. You are wonderful. Thank you.

To the other four districts: You are awesome. You are leaders. You are really, really true leaders in public education.

Claudio (Sanchez), I want thank you for moderating (the superintendents panel) this morning. You deserve a good round of applause because you did a great, great job.

And, Joel, I think I know how you feel.

My board, a truly outstanding board of trustees, please stand. You have done a great job.

Secretary Paige and Secretary Riley, you have done a great job for education. I want to thank you for everything you have done for education.

We educate all our children. That's our job. We take it seriously. We are very proud to be recipients of The Broad Prize. This will lift our district to the highest levels. But let me pay tribute to the ones that really earned it. Those were the students, the teachers, all of the staff, the parents and the community of Brownsville. They have done an outstanding job.

Thank you very much.

Celebratory Luncheon & Keynote Address

The Museum of Modern Art, New York City

Dan Katzir, Managing Director, The Broad Foundation

Wanda Bamberg, Superintendent, Aldine Independent School District, Texas

James Notter, Superintendent, Broward County Public Schools, Fla.

Christopher Steinhauser, Superintendent, Long Beach Unified School District, Calif.

Alberto Carvalho, Superintendent, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Fla.

Hector Gonzales, Superintendent, Brownsville Independent School District, Texas

DAN KATZIR: Welcome to the celebratory luncheon for the 2008 Broad Prize for Urban Education.

Because of the tremendous efforts and progress in each of these school systems, their students will now receive much-needed assistance to go to college. Brownsville will receive \$1 million in college scholarships, and the four finalist districts will each receive \$250,000 in scholarships. In our eyes, you're all winners, and we know that your students will benefit from your accomplishments.

Before we hear from our keynote speaker, we want to take a moment to recognize each of our Broad Prize finalists. These districts have distinguished themselves as the most improved urban school districts in the country, and all of us here today join them in celebrating their success.

Superintendent Wanda Bamberg from Aldine has 31 years of experience in the field of education, 27 in Aldine, where she serves over 60,000 students.

WANDA BAMBERG: Good afternoon. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity and thank, again, Eli and Edye Broad for your vision and leadership. It is a great opportunity to be Broad Prize finalists, and this is our third time, and as I have shared with others—I'll take the money in any increment you choose to give it to us, for our students. We can take a million at a time, or we'll go 250 at a time, but we'll do like Long Beach, keep coming back. I'd like to do that, it's a great opportunity to learn from the other finalists who are here today. And I certainly want to congratulate Brownsville. If Aldine is not taking the money to Texas, I am glad that Brownsville is taking the money to Texas, so congratulations, again.

Those of you who were here earlier heard me talk about how our managed instruction is a best practice. We work very carefully to identify what should be taught, we train people how to teach it, we assess what's taught, and we look at the data.

Another best practice that is very closely tied to that is our balanced scorecard approach. And I will have to say—the board holds us accountable for the amount of money and the

number of scholarships that we earn for our students—or, I should say, our students earn. And so, we go out and find those. And for our first quarter, I'm happy to say that we have \$250,000 worth of scholarships!

So, we're going to be working towards \$10 or \$12 million, at least, by the end of the school year. So, thank you, again, for making that happen.

And I do need to mention that I became superintendent of schools in Aldine in 2007. And you know that the data that was used for this particular finalist was the data between 2004 and 2007. So, I have to thank my mentor—who is not here with us today—Nadine Kujawa, because she really deserves a lot of the credit for the structure that we have in Aldine, and all of the good things that we've been doing for our students.

DAN KATZIR: Jim Notter of Broward County Public Schools, the nation's sixth largest district, encompassing Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. We welcome Jim and his Broward County delegation as a first-time Broad Prize finalist. Jim wins the prize for the most years of experience in public education—36 years.

JAMES NOTTER: Good afternoon. It's certainly a celebration time.

First and foremost, the intellectual property called “teacher” is extremely valued in our organization. We hire somewhere between 1,000 to 1,200 teachers a year, depending on the retirement bubble. It's quite a feat, you know, for a large school district to do that.

Several years ago, under the leadership of one of our board members and the total support of the board, we initiated what we call the Urban Teacher Academy. It's a grow-your-own program. We start in our high schools, and then the students receive a scholarship for their post-secondary education, and then ultimately come back and teach with us.

Right now, we have 260 students in the pipeline—roughly 20 percent of what my net catch has to be each year. But that's 20 percent fewer that I have to go after and maybe take from

some of you. But we're extremely proud of the partnerships that we have in the Urban Teacher Academy.

One of the key drivers in that is: The four presidents of the local universities, one of our board members and I meet quarterly, and clear decisions are made.

True decisions are made. Let me give you two of them. We've now mandated in those four universities that the education graduates will come out knowing how to use and integrate technology in their chosen academic fields. So, whether they come out as a science major, or a math major, or an elementary major, they, in fact, will have the prerequisite skills to immediately engage in our school system in terms of what we require and the use of technology in the day-to-day delivery of instruction for all children.

We've also developed what we call a "Broward Education Enterprise Portal—BEEP," which has over 8,000 lessons currently available to 16,500 teachers in Broward County, 24/7. All of those lessons, throughout the curriculum areas, have been vetted by a panel of their peers. It does not go on the portal unless it passes that peer-review.

So, when we recruit teachers, we not only recruit them to sunshine, palm trees and a beach. We also recruit them to what I talked about in terms of the qualities of a public school system, and that is, "Come down to Broward. You'll not only enter the Broward school system with a laptop; you'll have access to a BEEP portal which has 8,000 lesson plans, completely vetted. We're family, and we care."

DAN KATZIR: Chris Steinhauser was appointed superintendent of Long Beach Unified School District in 2002. Chris has not only spent his entire career in Long Beach, but he also attended the district as a student. Long Beach won the prize in 2003, and has been a finalist every year it has been eligible—which means that the district has shown impressive student gains upon impressive student gains.

CHRIS STEINHAUSER: I want to tell you about two great things in Long Beach. A month ago, our teachers came to the board of education and said, "May we raise the social

promotion standards in our district?" Long Beach Unified, under Carl Cohn, was the first school district in California to end social promotion.

So, starting this year in Long Beach, no student who is more than one year below grade level in mathematics or in reading will go onto the next grade level. It's going to be the toughest standards of all California urban schools.

And then the other piece is our math program. Our math program in the elementary schools has now expanded to the middle school, so you're more than welcome to come, but within a three-year period, our students have grown 24 percent in proficiency, and we now out-rank the entire State of California in mathematics.

DAN KATZIR: I'd like to introduce Alberto Carvalho, who just last month was appointed superintendent of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Starting as a science teacher in the district, Alberto has 17 years at Miami-Dade, and for the last several years, served as assistant superintendent under Rudy Crew.

And I'd also like to acknowledge Dr. Rudy Crew. Rudy has been an educator for over 25 years, having served as the superintendent in Sacramento Unified School District, Tacoma Public Schools, and the New York City Board of Education. And before coming to Miami, Rudy was the director of district reform for the Stupski Family Foundation. We're thrilled to have you here, Rudy, thank you for being with us.

ALBERTO CARVALHO: In Miami we believe that public education is far more than the three R's. We believe that public education is the enabling of democracy for our nation. There are two best practices that I'd like to convey to you. Number one, the much-discussed, much-researched School Improvement Zone. The Zone is a revolutionary approach to lowest-performing schools in our district. It works by realigning and redistributing federal funding, and expanding the regular school day and the regular school year, homogenizing the curriculum for children, providing a seamless transition of children from pre-K through elementary through senior high school, and in the process, dignifying teachers who would be willing to teach in these harshest of conditions, by increasing their

pay by as much as 20 percent with a commitment to very targeted, laser-like, focused professional development.

Two, the Parent Academy—probably the truest partnership between private and public interests—an initiative that grew out of a promise made by the community that they would fully fund an academy, a schooling experience, for parents. To the extent that the program would grow and, in fact, produce parents that not only were they engaged in their children’s lives, but would also become advocates for public education.

Three years after the kickoff of the Parent Academy, we’re now running an initiative worth about \$3.6 million annually and representing about 140,000 parents who have taken classes at 200-plus sites throughout Miami-Dade. We have a repertoire of courses now—80-plus different courses that parents can take.

DAN KATZIR: Superintendent Hector Gonzales is a native of the Rio Grande Valley, which borders Mexico. He has spent 28 years as a superintendent, administrator and teacher at schools in districts across south Texas.

HECTOR GONZALES: If you look at Brownsville, you say, “How do we do it? So, what’s the best practice?” Developing a philosophy that teachers believe in. And that philosophy is that all students can learn. From there you develop your initiatives and your strands that build into that philosophy.

If you come to Brownsville—and I encourage you to do that—you can walk into any classroom and feel the passion. They’re teaching students, they’re not teaching math.

You know, we’re data-driven, results-oriented. That’s all it is. You have to know what the child brings to the table. You have to know where they’ve been before you can take them to where they need to be. You need to know what they’ve done in the past. You certainly can’t take them to Algebra II if they were unsuccessful at Algebra I. You have to see where their strengths are and where their weaknesses are and then build from there.

And that's the philosophy we have. Treat every child as an individual, not a group. They all have different experiences that they bring to the table, not the lack of ability to learn, but different experiences.

Remember, a child can learn in any language; we rescind the border. We get a lot of students who don't know English when they first arrive on our campus, but do you stop the learning? No. We have a great transitional bilingual program. You ever see one in action? Come by and see us.

You teach them in the language they know, and you transition them into English. They start out in Spanish, for the most part, in our district. Ninety percent of the instruction in kindergarten is in Spanish, and by the time they get to the third grade, it's 90 percent in English. But the learning has not stopped.

ELI BROAD: Everyone here should know that 37 of Brownsville's 52 campuses are rated exemplary. One-third of the high schools in Brownsville are in U.S. News and World Report's list of the Best High Schools in America. So, in the face of stark poverty, the district has made significant gains, and shown what urban education looks like at its best.

It is fitting that our distinguished keynote speaker similarly epitomizes the best of his profession. A graduate of the University of South Dakota with a bachelor's degree in political science, Tom Brokaw has spent four decades keeping Americans current on local, national and world events.

During the Watergate era, Tom served as NBC's White House correspondent. He went on to anchor the NBC Saturday Night News, the Today Show with Jane Pauley, Dateline NBC, and Now with Tom Brokaw and Katie Couric. The night the Berlin Wall collapsed, Tom was the only American anchor to report on location from the wall itself. He's conducted many first one-on-one interviews, with people such as Mikhail Gorbachev, the first American interviews with Prime Minister Primikov and President Putin.

On September 11th, Tom participated in all-day coverage of events, including extended Nightly News coverage until midnight, for a number of days following the attacks. He continues to hold our nation's highest leaders' feet to the fire, and as you recall, it was just last week that he moderated the debate between Senators McCain and Obama. So, it's not hard to see why, at the time of his retirement, after 22 years as managing editor and anchor of the NBC Nightly News with Tom Brokaw, the show was the highest-rated evening news program in the United States.

Tom is also an accomplished author, with several best sellers to his name, including *The Greatest Generation*, *Boom: Voices of the Sixties*, *Personal Reflections on the Sixties and Today*—and if you haven't read it, get it, because it's being released today in paperback.

His commitment to the news business runs deep. Even when he retired from NBC Nightly News in 2004, he agreed to stay with the network as a special correspondent. And this past June, when his good friend Tim Russert passed away, Tom agreed to step in as host of *Meet the Press*. To so many of us who have welcomed Tom Brokaw into our homes night after night for several decades, he's really like a member of our family.

So, I'm really delighted that he's joining us today to help celebrate the 2008 Broad Prize. Please join me in welcoming Tom Brokaw.

TOM BROKAW: I was so delighted to walk into this room today and see so many friends, and it reminded me how much time I have spent in my journalistic career working on the issues of education. And I would like to say, especially to the Brownsville Independent School District, congratulations. But let me extend that congratulations to all of you, because you're all winners. The fact that you're here indicates that you're a winner, and the fact that you have a personal and common commitment to education in this country also makes you a champion, in my eyes, in terms of what we need to do in our society.

Now, I must tell you that, when I was a young man and kind of a whiz kid in the middle grades and high school, I went off to college and went pretty seriously off the rails for a couple of years. And then I made my recovery with the help of a wonderful mentor that I had

at the University of South Dakota—the dean of the political science department there, Dr. Farber, who created generations of Rhodes Scholars, federal judges, governors and senators, but always knew how to keep us in perspective.

And I managed to make that recovery with his guidance and then go on to the life that I have now. And when I began to get honorary degrees, some of the universities would call him for some background material, and he always had the same response. He would say to them, “We always believed the degree that we gave Tom was an honorary degree.”

So, it gives you a little perspective, I think, on my qualifications for standing up here before you.

I thought I would take just a few minutes of your time today and talk about education in a historic, and at the same time, a contemporary context. We now know that we have a new world before us, a landscape of less, not more. A world that is shaped by the sobering realities of what happens when values give way to gratification, by whatever means possible. A world in which excess and imprudence proved to be powerful forces of destruction.

This is a humbling time for all of us. It is also a time that will force us to think anew about priorities and obligations and our families and our communities in our national society. We have a rebuilding job before us in America, not unlike the victims of Katrina, or those residents of the communities where tornadoes roll across the Great Plains every summer, leveling homesteads and businesses and hopes, compelling the people in their path to think anew about what’s important, and what should be done first and what can be done better.

Restoring a sense of financial sanity and security, of course, is a first order in the times in which we’re living. But then we must lay a foundation for a fair and productive and competitive society—a society of opportunity and vision.

It does remind me of John F. Kennedy who, on July 4th, 1960, when he was running for president said, “It is time for a new generation of leadership to cope with new problems and

new opportunities, for there is a new world to be won.” Setting aside the presidential campaign, he was, in effect, speaking to all of us as citizens.

I believe it’s time for all of us to raise our hands and re-enlist as citizens. In this new world, we are paying attention because so many of our assumptions and our expectations have been shattered or compromised, and as a result, we wonder what the future holds for us.

What, then, should we make of this opportunity? Allow me to cite one or two historic examples. When I wrote about the greatest generation, understandably, most people responded to the terrible trials of their war experience and the modesty of that generation and its post-war accomplishments—the individual stories of heroism, perseverance, enterprise and commitment to the common good.

The underpinning, however, of the greatest generation was the Great Depression. It was in that ordeal that this generation first learned the values of priorities, sacrifice, common cause. They had no other option than to choose carefully, and well, for there were no second chances. They learned to live without so they could have what they needed for what counted.

Those lessons, of course, were hardened by World War II. And so, when that ordeal ended, the priorities were mandatory, and they began with education. The G.I. Bill remains, to this day and forever more, one of the genius strokes of any society. It not only educated millions of young people who otherwise would not have had advanced training, but it also exposed them to the value of education in a modern industrial society and a more competitive world. Those new doctors and lawyers and teachers and business executives, journalists and others returned to their communities and they served on the school boards, and state boards of education. They were, in many instances, the first in their families with college educations, and yet when they emerged from that educational experience, they had no greater calling in life than to pass along this new tradition to their offspring.

But somewhere along the way, we did lose our urgency and common passion about education. We wound up with a fractured agenda and a system with too many unequal

parts. We didn't keep pace with what the new world required in terms of training and discipline. As a result, we have an educational system that represents a checkerboard, with some squares filled and poised to claim victory, and others vacant or anemic.

In too much of the educational bureaucracy, there is a resistance to change and reform. In too many homes, there are too many parents who, fairly, don't have the time to invest in their children's education.

Nonetheless, I believe that there is great hope now, because so many more influential and generous people are paying attention. This room is witness to that today. We honor all of you who are here today, whatever your station in life, for you serve as models for the rest of us.

As I go across America, I'm also encouraged by the generation coming online. We have a remarkable young niece who went to Harvard and became an all-Ivy soccer player, but her passion was education. She's in Teach For America and has been living with us on and off for the last couple of years, getting advanced training at Columbia and going into the toughest districts in New York City to share with them her skills and understanding of what is required.

Charter and new forms of private schools are springing up across the landscape, offering new hope to hungry young minds and their parents, determined to fulfill the American Dream. Now we have a chance to distill and combine what we have learned and attach it to the top of the national agenda. We have a chance to say to American businesses that, as you address the fundamentals of your future on this much smaller and more competitive planet, the education of your workforce and its families must not be just an afterthought.

We can say to teachers and their unions that we understand your concerns and share them, but you must meet us on the common ground of innovation, merit pay, incentive and reward for excellence. You do not want to become the villain in this piece.

We can find new ways—tangible and worthwhile—to reward involved parents, and offer recognition in the wider culture, and not just on Wednesday nights at the PTA meetings in the gymnasium.

We can use the new information age technology not just as teaching tools, but as networks for shared advances, as virtual classrooms, where students can do their homework or engage in competition on an educational level, as well as check out the latest message for them on YouTube.

We can tap into the best and brightest of the emerging generations to make them a network of new ideas for education techniques, motivation and organization. In short, we can raise the fundamental place of education to new heights—if we don't care who gets the credit, and if we're willing to invest a fraction of the time in that great calling, as we do in our more leisurely pursuits.

This is a subject close to my mind, and my heart. When I was leaving Nightly News, Jeff Immelt, the chair and CEO of GE, called around to my friends to find out what GE and Jeff, particularly, might do to honor the years that I had served in that chair. And I remember they had pretty attractive ideas—give him 100 hours on the GE airplane, or send Tom and Meredith off on their greatest vacation. And then they called Meredith, a former schoolteacher. And she said, “We can take care of all that. If you could do something about education, I know that that would be most meaningful to Tom.”

And so there is, in New York City, a \$2 million-endowed Greatest Generation Scholarship Fund, in which we send young people—based on merit—from all of the schools in the city off to their educational experience at the highest level.

I had lunch with them earlier this year—they gave me enormous pride with their sense of adventure and the realization that there was not anything that they could not overcome.

I'm a child of working-class America, a product of the greatest generation, a pilgrim of the '50s and '60s, when my generation, the luckiest generation, was coming of age. America, at

that time when I was growing up, was triumphant and compassionate, charging into the future, beginning to come to grips with the cancerous effects of racism in our society; acknowledging the need for gender equality and pouring money and personal commitment into the schools at every level.

I took full advantage and, yes, I did stumble. My primary majors my first two years in college were co-eds and cocktails.

I was fully aware, however, when I completed my educational work, of what I was handed—an education that was denied my Depression-era parents and all of their hopes.

That education made it possible for me to pursue the life that I have today, and I have never forgotten the debt I owe to those who made it possible.

I'm also pleased to say that along the way I've met other like-minded souls, one of them is here today, Charles Desmond, whom I wrote about in Boom! Charles Desmond and I shared a lot of interests when we were undergraduates. We were very good at missing class and very good at shooting pool. We were very good at being adrift, and not very good at being focused. Charles Desmond went off to Vietnam, and he came back a changed man. And now he is one of the most distinguished educators in America, especially at the University of Massachusetts, and I'm very happy to see him here today and to acknowledge him as well.

Over the years, I have reported on and produced award-winning documentaries on what it takes to be a teacher. The program was called, simply, "To Be A Teacher"—on the inequities of school districts in the city and the other ones in the suburbs.

I also won a Peabody Award for the place of affirmative action in American life in education.

But for me, the lingering memory that will always be my yardstick about the world in which we now live and what is required of all of us, was something I saw during a reporting trip to Seoul, South Korea. Because of the time difference, I was on the air early in the morning,

before dawn. Our broadcast location was a middle school in Seoul. I was on a roof overlooking the courtyard. Every morning at 6 a.m., the yard began to fill up with earnest 12- and 13-year-old boys and girls. They sat quietly, opened their school book bags, and began their homework by the light of tiny flashlights until the doors around which they were huddled opened to mark the formal beginning of their day.

In their way, Eli and Edythe are shining a light on each of us, reminding us all of the homework still undone. We need to leave here today determined to huddle by the schoolhouse door, prepared to open it in a new and much more meaningful fashion. We can have no greater legacy for our generation.

Thank you all very much, and congratulations, once again, to all of you.

ELI BROAD: Thank you so much, Tom, for sharing your time, your insights, and your thoughts with us. We all look forward to your coverage of the next 22 days of the presidential election campaign, and beyond.

Once again, I want to congratulate Brownsville and all of the finalist districts. I hope you take this celebration back to your hometowns and continue your hard and important work.

With that, thank you all for coming, have a great afternoon.