

REMARKS FROM SJSU PRESIDENT MARY L.  
PAPAZIAN

LAUNCH OF SJSU INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF  
SPORT, SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

January 24, 2017

Ladies and gentlemen, good morning!

I'm Mary Papazian, president of San Jose State University.

It is my privilege and pleasure to welcome you to the Hammer Theatre Center.

I also want to say good morning to those who've joined us remotely in the Diaz Compean Student Union or are viewing our live web-stream.

I regret that we couldn't fit all of you inside the theatre. But I'm glad that technology enables you to participate nonetheless.

We're here for what I'm certain will be a captivating, informative conversation about sports and social activism.

I suspect you'd agree with me that the theme of our morning—*From Words to Action*—is both timely and relevant.

And I am grateful to the luminaries from professional and amateur sports, journalism, and social action lending their voices and disparate perspectives to our conversation.

You'll meet them in a bit, and I can't wait to hear what they have to say.

And this is *just the start* of the conversation.

Because we also are here today to celebrate the birth of an Institute at San Jose State University for the study of sports, society and social change.

That, too, is both timely and relevant.

And there's no question that San Jose State is the ideal home for the institute. You need only

glance at today's program or the banners adorning the theatre, or stroll our campus to understand why.

We are proud of the many Spartans who have used their careers in sport as platforms for change.

Dr. Harry Edwards, who will moderate our second panel, has been at the epicenter of sports and social change for—dare I say it—a half-century.

Many of you know about his long association with the San Francisco 49ers or his esteemed academic career at UC Berkeley.

*But today, I want to be sure that you* also know that Dr. Edwards began his educational journey as an undergraduate at San Jose State.

Harry is a *Spartan!* And we are proud to launch an institute that reflects the focus of his life's work at his alma mater.

The Institute truly will bear his heart and his soul. And it will be enriched by his vision and

intellect, along with the San Jose State faculty members and many others who will inform its development.

Dr. Edwards inspired and led the Olympic Project for Human Rights. He has profoundly influenced the lives of many athletes and other leaders from the world of sport.

That includes many Spartans, including Coach Bill Walsh and track and field legends John Carlos and Tommie Smith.

I had the pleasure of spending time with Harry, John and Tommie last August when we gathered to announce the return of men's track and field to San Jose State in 2018.

That announcement took place in front of the campus sculpture that commemorates the 1968 Mexico City Olympic medal stand protest that provoked global outcry, forever changed John and Tommie's lives, and influenced countless others'.

John could not be here today, but we are grateful that Tommie has joined us.

Activism and sport have long been deeply intertwined. Today's panel discussions will bring both historical and contemporary perspectives.

And our Institute will provide a framework and structure that enables and empowers voices from diverse viewpoints to continue the dialogue.

The institute also will be a home to educational offerings that may include degree completion programs for athletes. It will facilitate research and community programming like today's.

Athletic excellence is part of San Jose State's legacy. Striving for social change through informed, principled activism is embedded in our institutional DNA.

But these values do not exist in isolation.

They inform our mission. They inspire our efforts to serve so many students from historically marginalized communities.

And they help explain why a recently released Social Mobility Index named San Jose State one of America's *top ten* universities empowering the upward mobility of its students.

I am very excited about today's program, and grateful that so many of you have joined us.

On behalf of our university and broader community, welcome to San Jose!