

REMARKS FROM SJSU PRESIDENT MARY PAPAZIAN  
August 1, 2016

Good morning, everyone!

Isn't this a great day? We special-ordered the sunshine from faculty in our Department of Meteorology and Climate Science.

I am Mary Papazian. I'm proud to be president of San Jose State University-  
-the founding campus of the California State University and first public  
university in the West!

It is an honor to welcome each of you to a special celebration that has been  
months in the making.

Although, in a way, it has been *decades* in the making. San Jose State's  
legacy of track and field excellence dates back to the 1940's.

And that excellence was sustained over several decades. This weekend, I  
was captivated by an article in the May 22, 1961 issue of *Sports Illustrated*  
reporting on legendary coach Bud Winter's skill at recruiting many of the  
world's top track and field athletes to San Jose State.

Today, we celebrate that storied past and share some big news about our  
future.

First, join me in extending a warm Spartan welcome to San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo, and District 3 San Jose City Council member and proud Spartan Raul Peralez.

Mayor Liccardo will have a few words for us in a moment.

As we all know, the Rio summer Games begin later this week. The 1968 Mexico City games are part of the Spartan legacy we celebrate today.

In that spirit, we want to acknowledge past Spartan track and field Olympic medal winners, several of who have joined us today. I invite each of you to stand so that we can give you a big shout out!

Tommie Smith, 1968, gold, 200 meters.

Lee Evans, 1968, gold, 400 meters; gold, 4x400 meters relay.

John Carlos, 1968, bronze, 200 meters.

John Powell, 1976, bronze, discus; 1984, bronze, discus.

You all are a major part of our legacy. We are proud of you and thrilled you are here.

We also remember two Spartan gold medal winners who have passed on:

Ronnie Ray Smith, 1968, gold, 4x100 meters relay

And, Willie Steele, 1948, gold, broad jump

Now, please join me in welcoming San Jose's 65th mayor, Sam Liccardo.

(Mayor Liccardo speaks)

Thank you, Mayor Liccardo. And thanks to all of our community leaders and special guests for joining us today.

Now, it is a *particular* joy to welcome a special group of alumni.

That *Sports Illustrated* article to which I referred earlier lauded San Jose State track and field as "one of the best ... teams in the country."

Coach Winter was regarded "with suspicion" by rival coaches because of his success bringing athletes to San Jose from all over the world.

This story isn't *just* about athletic success. It's also about the struggle for racial equality and social justice. One of those recruits, sprinter Dennis Johnson, noted in the S.I. article how hard it was to find a good apartment to rent because "the neighbors might object to the presence of Negroes."

That reminds us --as does this sculpture -- of the role San Jose State student-athletes have played in this struggle.

That, of course, continues today.

So to all of you, a mere “welcome” is not sufficient. I want you to know how overjoyed we are to welcome you home!

And now, I would like to ask athletics director Gene Bleymaier to come up and share today’s big news. Gene?