

Speech given by Library Board President M Katie Corning at Ground Breaking Ceremony on April 5, 2011.

Thank you, Leroy.

And thanks to all of you for joining us today, a day we have looked forward to for a long time. How long? My son Wiley was just finishing 1st grade at Beach School when the planning for this building began. This fall, Wiley is going off to college. That's a long time.

It was time spent talking and interacting with our community, time spent planning and saving and investing, time spent choosing the best possible team to design and engineer and now, to build our new home. And now, finally, here we are.

I stand before you today with pride, and gratitude, and excitement:

Pride in the outstanding job Dr. Leroy Hommerding and his staff, and the library district Board of Directors have done to bring us to this day. We can be proud of all of them for doing it the right way.

Gratitude for the support of this community for the library and for this much-needed expansion project. Gratitude for the generous donations, not only of money for the Library Construction Fund, but of something even more precious, the countless hours of volunteer time that keep this library running. Gratitude to the Friends of the Library, who annually raise tens of thousands of dollars for the library. You know, I was talking with the Friends' Bookstore manager, Jim Coles, the other day. Jim is sitting right here in the front. Jim and I figured out that he has put in more than *20,000 hours* as a volunteer at the bookstore. Ten years of his life! Jim, thank you.

I guess there's no need to explain the excitement we all share. We are about to break ground on a project that not only will make our island more beautiful, but will offer our residents and visitors the best possible library services, programs, technology, and materials. And something more: A place to come together, to meet, to study, to enjoy the arts, and to socialize, without a context of religion or local politics.

Our goal is to be nothing less than the center for intellectual and cultural activity in this community, for ourselves, for our children, and for generations to come.

It is time! Thank you.