Thank you - I am truly honored to receive this award. I have been most fortunate to be a part of this totally American Creation. It has been a very personal journey and labor of love. Little did I know growing up as a product of the land in rural Iowa that I would be standing here in the nation’s capital today. Little did I know in 1963 that when I was Chair of the Jaycees in Spencer, IA we invited in the candidate for Governor (and soon to be elected) Harold Hughes to talk about his vision for a system of community and technical colleges in Iowa. With a slide election win and the assistance of a young legislator from NW, IA by the name of Jack Kibbie. Jack Kibbie is considered to be the father of IA’s Community College and the most stalwart legislative supporter of the Community College movement. After his early years of service, he took a 17 year vacation out of politics to lead the Iowa Lakes Community College Board as its President. Later he was reelected and just retired as President of the Iowa Senate. This is the kind of commitment that is so evident from trustees, legislators, and the citizens we serve. To this day, Senator Kibbie’s commitment remains deep. Every year he comes to work with our young leaders in talking about the birth and growth of the Community College movement.

My journey to Iowa State and my early association with Junior and Community Colleges came through the old K-14 system. My first teaching job as a vocational agriculture instructor was in Iowa Falls, IA in a district that included Ellsworth Junior College. I began my work with Community Colleges when I went to work with Virgil Lagomarcino. He had been Director of Junior Colleges for the Iowa Department of Education before he came to ISU to start what was to become the College of Education. I began working with Iowa Community College Presidents as his representative. One of those Presidents was David Pierce, then President of North Iowa Area Community College later to become one of the most significant Presidents and CEOs of the American Association of Community Colleges. While we all mourn his passing, I am very pleased that AACC chose to have a fall page photo of “In Memory of David Pierce” in the program. I learned so much about the movement and mission of the Community College from him. His commitment was evident in the development of future leaders as he would talk to our
classes via phone and returned to Iowa each year to work with our program. His style of humbleness, grace, and deep commitment to community colleges and the students who attend them will forever serve as a foundation for my work with Community Colleges.

I also want to acknowledge the continued work and commitment of my good friends and colleagues, George Boggs and Walter Bumphus, who have served so ably in their role. Both of these individuals have and continue to be partners in the continuing development of future leaders for our community colleges.

I have been most fortunate to have many partners in the preparation of future leaders. Nearly 25 years ago the Presidents of Iowa Community Colleges joined with us at ISU to start a program of leadership for women and minorities. 5 years later we started another program for mid to upper level administrators. Both are still vibrant and we have graduates who are in leading roles throughout the country.

Our success, however, would not have been as great without the continued support of our Iowa Presidents and Iowa State University in both academic and personal development. At the danger of leaving someone out I will not name the many of you who have journeyed to help us with our academic and leadership development. I do, however, want to recognize including all of the grad students, who have helped me through the years, some of who are sitting this audience. You were the first ones to come and be a part of our program for nearly all of these 25 years. The first is Jerry Sue Thornton, a fellow award winner. She started coming when she was President at Lakewood in Minnesota and she will be with us next week. Jerry Sue, you are a rockstar and most deserving of this award.

I also want to recognize others who have been instrumental in coming and helping shape the curriculum and the program almost every year. They are:

- Kay McClennedy – The Queen of “Students Do Optional” but more importantly she is the thought leader of our profession in the creation of a culture of evidence.
• Katherine Boswell – Executive Director of Community College Policy Center and my CC policy guru. And
• Jackie Vietti, President Emeritus. Butler Community College.
• DeRionne Pollard, President of Montgomery College and proud ISU grad.

While the issues of student success, the completion agenda, access, equity and accountability remain central and a challenge for all of us, I believe one of the most fundamental needs as we continue our leadership journey is the education and development of our future leaders, particularly among women, persons of color, and special populations.

We were reminded by Kent Phillipe at our Academic Program Director’s meeting on Thursday that 42% of our Presidents will retire in 5 years and 72% will retire in 10 years.

Without your support and the identification of future leaders in their academic and professional endeavors, the movement will not succeed. Much of what we have accomplished has been due to the passion and commitment of all of you. It is important that as we pass the torch to the next generation we do it with that same passion and commitment. I applaud the second edition the AACC Competencies for Community College Leaders to help guide us in this very important transition.

On Thursday afternoon I went to see the new statue of Norman Borlaug at our U.S. capital. Norman Borlaug born in Cresco, IA saved a billion lives through his work with growing wheat. Although not an ISU graduate, his impact is unparalleled. That resulted in a Nobel Peace Prize and having The World Food Prized named after him. Another well-known land grand graduate is George Washington Carver and ISU grad. Both had the advantage of getting their start at a land grant university. Today’s land grand institutions are the Community Colleges of America whether it be in Cresco Iowa, at Northeast Iowa Community College, Sinclair in Dayton Ohio or Montgomery College in MD or Pratt in Kansas or any other CC homes of the outstanding alumni being honored at this conference. A faculty member took the time to care, a staff member to encourage, someone to open the door to give them hope and to share the American dream.
As Christine Johnson McPhail said this fall at one of our leadership sessions, “It is not about the what it is about the who.”

I want to thank my Iowa State CCLP colleagues Frankie Santos Laanan, Linda Hagedorn, Jan Friedel, Soko Starobin, and Sharon Drake and our students who work within supporting our endeavors.

I also want to personally thank Mick Starcevich and President of the Iowa Community College Presidents for their support of my nomination. In particular I know that it took an institution to lead this nomination effort. I want to raise up Dr. Liang Chee Wee President of NICC, Dr. Julie Huiskamp, Executive Director of H.R. – a graduate of our leadership academy, and Dr. Ken Reimer, President of the NICC Board of Trustees for NICC efforts in putting this nomination together.

There is one other person I want to thank and it is my wife, Barb. We have been together over nearly 52 years. She has opened our home to hundreds of graduate students, participants in our program and community college leaders throughout these years.

If Jim Collins is correct and I think he is – One of his hallmarks of leadership is humbleness. I am truly humbled by this award and I thank you for it. May we all go forth in the 21st century Reclaiming the American Dream and Implementing the 21st Century Student Success agenda. Thank you.