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Opening Remarks on the Occasion of the Centennial Celebration Commemorating the Life of Dr. Edward J. Mortola

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David A. Caputo

Remarks

March 8, 2006

Good afternoon, and welcome to another in a series of our Centennial Year Celebration programs.

I am especially pleased to welcome Doris Mortola to our celebration today, and I want to thank the members of the Library Centennial Committee for their efforts to bring us together to pay tribute to Ed Mortola.

Today is an especially noteworthy one in our Centennial year program, for we gather to remember and reflect on the achievements of one of the truly towering figures in Pace University's long and proud history.

Like our original founders, Homer and Charles Pace, Ed Mortola can be remembered for his absolute commitment to opportunitas, for his innovative and entrepreneurial spirit, for his firm belief in the concept of a student-centered approach to higher education, and for his resolute adherence to the notion of accountability.

None other than management guru Peter Drucker acknowledged Ed's leadership style in his book Innovation and Entrepreneurship, when he called Ed a "radical innovator" who through his leadership had given all members of his top management team "a major, clearly defined responsibility for which they were expected to take full accountability and give leadership."

In many ways, Ed created what we see today as the modern Pace University. Initiatives under his leadership are hallmarks of our great history – the establishment of

campuses in Pleasantville, White Plains, Briarcliff and the construction of 1 Pace Plaza in lower Manhattan, as well as the opening of our Midtown Center on 5th Avenue; the introduction of the liberal arts degree programs; the creation of professional schools in nursing, education, continuing education and law; and the granting of university status to Pace College in 1973.

More than these obvious achievements, though, the Mortola legend at Pace was created by his unending and wholly sincere commitment to the students who attended

Pace University, and to the staff and faculty who served them. Many of you in this room give testimony to that fact.

I have talked often during this Centennial year about the true richness of Pace University being found in its people. Ed Mortola also believed that the really distinguishing mark of Pace University could be found in the hundreds and thousands of individuals who formed the Pace family – its students, staff, faculty, alumni and alumnae. His own, oft-quoted words speak to this as in a 1986 interview for the University's alumni publication:

He said, “The job never failed to be thoroughly enjoyable; indeed, it has been fun. The constant change, growth, and development of the University and its people have provided the stimulation to devote my life fully to Pace. These have been good years at Pace and good years for me, as I have seen so many staff, faculty, and alumni chalk up such remarkable achievements.”

I can comfortably say, as the very fortunate leader of this wonderful institution some 20 years later, that the years since have also been good years at Pace, thanks in large part

to the visionary, creative, imaginative and skillful leadership of Ed Mortola, who chalked up so many remarkable achievements.

Those of us who today commit ourselves to the continuous improvement of Pace University in order to give students a better life and the chance to improve the lives of those around them do so in a spirit that was first created by the Pace brothers and that was reborn and reinvigorated during the nearly half century that Pace University was blessed to have Ed Mortola as part of its life.

I am delighted to be with you here today, and I am now pleased to introduce a man whose own affiliation with Pace runs from his time as a student during the early years of Ed's presidency to his serving as Ed's colleague on the Pace Board of Trustees. Please welcome the chairman of our Board of Trustees, Neil Bianco.