

The University of Kentucky Remembers

(honor ceremony for members of the UK community whose lives were lost in the previous year)

Kumble R. Subbaswamy, Provost

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North Lawn of the Main Building

The University of Kentucky was established by the state of Kentucky in 1865 as the Agricultural and Mechanical College of the Kentucky University. Substantial initial funding for this educational institution was provided by the U.S. government through the Morrill Act, making UK a land grant institution from its earliest origins. Upon its creation, the city of Lexington provided additional funding and donated the City Park for use as a campus.

While these facts are notable and of interest to historians, they tell us very little about the heart of the University of Kentucky.

For our true footprint lies, not in our buildings and physical boundaries, but in the lives of our people:

- The students who are challenged and who learn and grow here;
- the faculty who explore, challenge, teach, and inspire here;
- the staff who work and dedicate themselves here; and
- the alumni who take their UK experience and have been known to change the world.

In our people:

in their hopes and aspirations; in their dedication and effort; in their loves and losses, this is where you find the true character of the University of Kentucky.

Today we gather to honor and mourn those in the UK family whose lives were lost this past year.

Today we symbolically embrace all those families and friends acutely experiencing loss to grieve as the larger UK family.

Today we can hear the words of Maya Angelou:

*If today, I follow death
Go down its trackless wastes,
Salt my tongue on hardened tears
For my precious dear times waste
Race along that promised cave in a headlong, dead-long haste,
Will you have the grace to mourn for me?*

Indeed we have that grace. Indeed we will mourn for all those we have lost.

But our remembrances do not stop there, for as sadness invades each breath we take, so too does a wish to celebrate the lives of those now gone.

In the women and men the UK family has lost in recent days and months, you will find a Nobel laureate whose science began in UK labs and you'll find a long serving educator and pioneer in her field. You will find a generous spirit who gave extraordinary service to this institution. You will find a young athlete who excelled on the field but was taken too soon from his family and his teammates.

And these extraordinary lives are just representatives of so many more.

In the members of the UK family whom we have lost we can count

- so many days of joy they spent here on the paths of this campus.
- so many ideas they conceived and dreams they chased.
- so much potential they realized and so much service they gave back.

We suffer the loss of our students, faculty, and staff but we remain mindful of all they contributed while they were here at UK and all they contributed after leaving.

It is as Einstein said, *"Our death is not an end if we can live on in our children and the younger generation. For they are us; our bodies are only wilted leaves on the tree of life."*

UK fulfills its mission to inspire, educate and serve because the students, staff, faculty and alumni who are part of this institution make that possible.

In their lives we feel the live pulse of their growth from and service to the University of Kentucky; in their deaths - - through remembering - - we use their gifts to build and strengthen the walls of all our buildings.

There you find the footprint of the University of Kentucky. There UK remembers.