I am so happy to celebrate the Number ONE reason UNLV has grown into the excellent institution we see today – our people.

So, welcome to our celebration of the milestones for years of service.

There is hardly a gift more valuable than the gift of time. Whether you are here as an awardee or to congratulate those who are, we want to acknowledge how much we value your commitment and what it means to the success of UNLV. I see a few people here who we recognized last year as the long-serving faculty on campus. Thank you for sharing this day with us.

During today’s ceremony, we recognize academic and administrative faculty for their great contributions to the university through their years of full-time service.

We are celebrating 122 individuals with 10 years, 20 years, 30 years, and 40 years of service.

Everyone receiving a service award is important, and deserving of acknowledgment. You are the people we count on, day in and day out, for institutional knowledge and wisdom essential to moving us forward.

And you have opened the doors for thousands of students to go into the world, confident and ready to succeed. You have mentored others who will follow in your footsteps.

As I looked at the list of everyone we’re recognizing today, it occurred to me how lucky we are to have such trailblazers among us.

Your teaching, mentoring, research and community contributions have strengthened and elevated our university. You have all made a difference.

You have helped UNLV grow into the sophisticated degree-granting research institution we have today.

I’m going to take us on a trip down memory lane… if you hear your name along the way, here, please remain seated and we will more formally recognize you during the presentation portion of the program…
Some of our longest-serving faculty have been here for some of the university’s most important milestones. Forty years ago, marked the 10th anniversary of our being recognized as the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. It was our first full decade of autonomy under the state’s higher education system. So that year, we erected UNLV’s clock tower, whose chimes would play the popular “Westminster” tune every half hour. The clock has been silent for a few years. So, if anyone knows how to get it working again, please let me know!

And that same year, our student body began to show signs of being true Rebels, doing away with formal dances in favor of a raucous Oktoberfest. You might recall the signature entertainment of this event -- The Fox, a human in an animal costume known for singing and drinking beer while standing on his head.

That’s what campus was like when Dr. Stephen Rowland arrived. We’re honoring him today for 40 years of service. Work like his continues to set us on a path of exploration and discovery, and inspires a daring spirit -- unafraid of challenging the prevailing school of thought.

That’s what makes us great.

If you picked up Live Science, The New York Post, or National Geographic this past month, you may have read about Dr. Rowland’s research on 310-million-year-old reptile tracks he and a colleague discovered in 2017. These tiny imprints could be the oldest footprints ever discovered in the Grand Canyon, and possibly the oldest of their kind on earth.

During his time at UNLV, Dr. Rowland’s research has led to discoveries in the fossil record of Southern Nevada from Red Rock Canyon and Valley of Fire State Park to the Tule Springs area, where Rowland and his students, among others, excavate fossilized Columbian mammoth tusks from the Ice Age.

Dr. Rowland’s work has put UNLV on the map, highlighting the region’s riches beyond the Strip.

Two other faculty members have served 40 years… To give this historic context, 40 years ago Ben and Jerry opened their first ice cream parlor in Vermont, Christopher Reeve starred in “Superman,” and the Bee Gees ruled the air waves with “Night Fever.”

Business Services Manager Rosalie Garcia and Dr. William Sullivan, were just getting started at UNLV about that time.

When Rosalie arrived, she worked in Human Resources, manually recording leave time for every new classified, administrative and academic faculty member. This involved use of the mimeograph, which has since been replaced by ever more complicated photocopy machines.

Her role on campus evolved, and she had a hand in shaping finance management in a number of areas, including Athletics, where she was instrumental in helping the department avoid controversy in the years following the Tarkanian era.
She also has been an advocate for faculty across campus as a long-serving member of the Faculty Senate, serving on committees for compensation, travel policy, campus climate, leave policy and merit review. Rosalie also served as a governor-appointed member of the Public Employee Benefits Board for three years as we were coming out of the Great Recession.

You may know Dr. Sullivan, our Associate Vice President for Retention and Outreach and the Executive Director of the Center for Academic Enrichment and Outreach.

Dr. Sullivan first came to UNLV to direct TRIO and other educational opportunity programs that particularly assist low-income and first-generation students achieve their dreams. These programs have resulted in generations of successful individuals, many of whom have become doctors, lawyers, engineers, and professionals in all disciplines. Under Dr. Sullivan’s leadership, the number of participants served by the center has increased from 50 students in 1978 to more than 25,000 annually.

Dr. Sullivan’s arrival coincided with our surpassing UNR in total enrollment. Now, we have a robust enrollment of over 30,000 that is also recognized as THE most diverse student body in the country.

Today, we have 12 honorees celebrating 30 years of service. A couple among these is… Lori Pullen – who started her UNLV career in the College of Fine Arts as a senior at Bonanza High School. She got her foot in the door as an usher at the Performing Arts Center, where she now serves as executive director.

Barbara Brents, a sociology professor and self-professed “rabble rouser,” helped found the Jean Nidetch Women’s Center, and the Women’s Studies Department. Throughout her UNLV career, she protested nuclear testing, the Gulf War, and for two years helped organize Womyn’s Festivals.

Our 30-year honorees are the people who arrived in the ‘80s, in time to be part of some important milestones for our campus.

In 1988, we celebrated the opening of the Thomas T. Beam Engineering Building and FOUR new residence halls to accommodate a large increase of out-of-state and Northern Nevada applicants.

Across the country, pop culture got interesting that year with “Rain Man” topping the box office, followed closely by “Who Framed Roger Rabbit?” Nike debuted its famous slogan, “Just do it.” … And on TV, Candice Bergen broke new ground with the hit show, “Murphy Brown.”

Flash forward to 1998. That’s when we welcomed the likes of Dave Beisecker, a philosophy professor whose love for UNLV is as much a part of him as his Hey Reb! tattoo – which his students designed as a way to celebrate his tenure.
People who joined UNLV 20 years ago have left an indelible mark, not only on campus, but on the community. The William S. Boyd School of Law opened in 1998. Today, we are fortunate to recognize law professor Terrill Pollman, a founding faculty member at the Boyd School of Law. The legal writing program that he started is now ranked Number ONE in the country by U.S. News & World Report. Thanks to trailblazers like professor Pollman, the law school has been recognized for numerous innovative programs, including Kids Court, and the UNLV Immigration Clinic.

For the Las Vegas Strip, 1998 was a transformative year with the opening of the Bellagio Hotel and Casino. It was also the first year of the Las Vegas Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1998, two college kids from Stanford University launched a search engine called Google. Big movies included “Saving Private Ryan” and “There’s Something About Mary,” and President Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky dominated headlines.

Those of you celebrating 10 years of service have helped create innovative programs that gave us bragging rights for being different, daring and diverse.

Over the past decade, you expanded learning opportunities beyond the classroom and beyond our campus. Take Online Education Director Beth Barrie, who has expanded our online course offerings to the point that 90 percent of our undergraduates take at least one online course on their way to graduation.

2008 brought us Entertainment Engineering and Design, a first-of-its-kind program that blends art, science and entertainment. That year, we also saw the opening of the Academic Success Center, our “first-stop, one-stop” hub for student advising, mentoring and academic coaching. This was also the year we dedicated Greenspun Hall as the home for five academic programs, KUNV-FM, UNLV-TV, and student media laboratories.

Although there was much to celebrate that year, it also ushered in the Great Recession. Despite those tough times, we have emerged with a mission to join the ranks of the top 100 American universities. We’ve made important gains, rising in national rankings for our diversity and inclusion, the quality of our colleges and schools, and student achievement.

I am honored to celebrate this day with you.

As we proceed with our ceremony, we are going to move quickly so we have time to enjoy the reception and each other!

Let’s start with the 68 faculty members who this year mark their first full decade of service! I’d like you all to stand as a group to be recognized. To mark this milestone, you will receive commemorative service pins, which will be distributed from designated tables at the end of the program. Thank you for your service and for continuing to build our legacy.

As we move into the formal part of our ceremony, let’s recognize people who have been with us for 20 years. We have 39 who have reached that milestone! Please, stand. The 20-year medallions also will be distributed from designated tables at the conclusion of the program.
Let me have you remain standing, and each say your name and home unit as we come around with the mic.

Thank you for your service.

The next group, those of you who have been part of the UNLV family for 30 years, we want to acknowledge you in a very special way. Please come to the front as we call your name, and present your service medallion.

Dr. Djetò Assane
Dr. Barbara Brents
Dr. Robert Chatfield
Dr. Ajoy Datta
Mary Green
Dr. Moses Karakouzian
Dr. Anthony Labounty
Dr. Atilla Lawrence
Lori Pullen
Dr. John Schibrowsky
Dr. David Shelton
Trish Suske

Thank you for your service!

The next three people I would like to recognize have been here 40 years. You have devoted a lifetime for the benefit of our students and our community. Please come up to receive your service medallions:

Dr. Stephen Rowland, geology professor.

Dr. William Sullivan, associate vice president for Retention and Outreach.

Rosalie Garcia, business services manager.

Thank you for your many years of service!
Treasure these medallions. Wear them today. Wear them to commencement and to any event where regalia is the order of the day – maybe the President’s Holiday Reception next week! Display them proudly in your office or home. As you see others with a medallion, ask about their story.... You are each part of the legacy that forged our identity as UNLV Rebels.