Thank you President Pershing, I’m truly honored to receive this award. I’d particularly like to thank the Rosenblatt family. People are our greatest asset, and I’m grateful that the Rosenblatts had the generosity and wisdom to create an award with that focus. It’s a particular honor to share the evening with two true heroes of our community, Gail Miller and Conrad Anker.

I hope you’ll bear with me while I thank some of the people who have been essential for any success I’ve had.

My parents, Burt and Marcia Sundquist are here. This was a special week for us because we were all together to celebrate my mom’s 93rd birthday yesterday.

Our dear friends, Chris Hill and Jacqui Wittmeyer, are also here. Chris and I have been working together for 25 years – first as close scientific colleagues and now as co-chairs of the Biochemistry Department. Chris is a spectacularly talented and generous scientist, and he’s a constant source of wisdom and integrity.

I’d also like to acknowledge another of my heroes – my brother Derek. Derek became a quadriplegic four years ago in a ski accident. Nevertheless, he has retained his wicked sense of humor, he greets each day with a smile, and he lives his life with great dignity. His situation has led us to discover that our city is in great need of better quality long-term community residences for people with severe physical disabilities. We have therefore initiated an effort, together with Dr. Jeff Rosenbluth and his colleagues in our Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, to create a state of the art “smart home” facility for severely physically disabled residents here in Salt Lake City. I hope that we can interest some of you in helping to support that cause as it moves forward.

I also need to thank my wife Nola. A few years ago, when our kids were younger, we were all sitting around the dinner table and I was teasing Nola, in what I thought was just good natured banter. Our young daughter Emily interrupted, looked directly and very seriously at me, and said: “Wes, Nola is the best thing that ever happened to you”. She was right.

Finally, want to thank the many students and colleagues who have contributed to our efforts. Research and education are team sports, and I’ve been fortunate to be on a number of outstanding teams.

I want to finish by acknowledging what I think we’ve all felt - that the past several weeks have been difficult ones for our Health Sciences Center and our University. It’s been painful to watch good people get hurt and to see cracks emerge in our community. Nevertheless, I remain optimistic. One reason is the wonderful news that President Pershing was able to convince Lorris Betz to return to return as Senior Vice President for Health Sciences. Dr. Betz is widely respected and will be a healing force. I also believe our community will continue to do what we do almost uniquely well, which is to tackle big problems with a collaborative and pioneering spirit. I would remind us all that our university is a highly interconnected ecosystem, and that every success, whether in the clinic, the research lab or in the English Department, lifts us all.

Thank you again for this wonderful award.