

UC Merced

Introduction: Historical Overview of American Research Universities

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**Academic Innovation and the American Research University
Symposium**
University of California, Merced
November 13, 2009

Introduction: Historical Overview of American Research Universities

[George M. Marcus](#)

Regent, University of California
Chairman of The Marcus & Millichap Company
Chairman of Essex Property Trust,

**CHANCELLOR;
PROFESSOR OF
ENGINEERING, UC
MERCED.
SUNG-MO "STEVE"
KANG, PH.D.**

Regent Marcus, it is a great honor to introduce you to our audience. Thank you for being here. Would you make some remarks, please?

**UC REGENT
GEORGE M.
MARCUS**

I didn't realize that I'd be yielding my time to the president. My goodness! [*laughs*] Just kidding. I want to thank the chancellor, the president, and the president is, of course, an extraordinary person, but now he'll be insufferable with this new top ten title. I don't know what we're going to do with you.

I'm just delighted to be here. You might wonder why regents feel the way I do and all the regents-- the regents are really uniquely interesting people. They're appointed from different backgrounds, they have different points of view, but we love this university. But all of us in this room inherited a marvelous institution. President Yudof was talking

about, gee, the mystery of why it happened. The facts are it's not a mystery. There were very specific things that occurred. And that's what I'm hoping, When I talked about having this Symposium--and again, let me thank all of you who prepared and thought and are participating in these panels, especially those of you who have traveled some distance and it's really devoted your life to the Academy.

So, my interest is to honor the university and to improve the university and never on my watch see it take a backward decline. So we are honored, but we're standing on the shoulders of people who made courageous decisions. Most of you are probably not aware that in 1920, a group of regents and a president decided to delegate all of the academic programs to the faculty. That was a seminal point, and that made an enormous difference. We all benefit from that today but don't understand and appreciate the importance of that. That's what I'm seeking hopefully today, to have one or two new building blocks that will make a difference.

We will--you might, some of you younger people might, but many of us in this room might never have the opportunity to be in this spot. We are dealing with the newest research university of this millennium, Merced. Those of you are so fortunate. So I am challenging all of you not to blow this opportunity. Please. Please. It's tough, you know, on one hand, I think the university is great because of the faculty councils responsibility in the academic programs. On the other hand, as you all know, the medieval, ecclesiastical roots still lie in the faculty. Change is slow.

So let's not lose this opportunity. And I'm very loathe to do this because I'll probably screw it up, but it reminds me of a small, brief statement that Brutus made to Cassius in the great Shakespearian

play, *[Julius] Caesar*. He said, "There is a time in the affairs of men—including women--when waters taken at the flood lead on to fortune. Omitted, all our lives will be in shallows and in miseries. On such a full sea, we are afloat." *[applause]*