

Officially Open for Learning:

North Park University dedicates Johnson Center for Science and Community Life

CHICAGO (September 18, 2014) — On Friday, September 12, a large crowd gathered for the ribbon-cutting ceremony on the campus green in front of the new [Johnson Center for Science and Community Life](#). “Good friends, we have anticipated for a long time this historic event in our life together at North Park,” University President Dr. David Parkyn said. “It’s time to get out your cameras to capture this moment.”

It has been two years since the groundbreaking for the Johnson Center, and fundraising for this next chapter of North Park University began well before that with [Campaign North Park](#), North Park’s [nationally recognized fundraising effort](#). Many people who played a crucial role in bringing the building to a reality, including alumni, students, staff, and friends of the University, were on hand to witness a collection of moments from this weekend’s dedication.

The first of those began earlier Friday, with the Medicine and Media Symposium in Anderson Chapel. Dr. G. Timothy Johnson, alumnus and co-chair of Campaign North Park, led a panel that included his former colleague, ABC News anchor Charles Gibson, and former dean of Harvard Medical School Dr. Joseph Martin. The three thought leaders discussed a variety of topics, including the role of media in health care, the state of health

care in this country, and predictions for its future. The camaraderie between the three was evident. Gibson noted that it is a great honor to have a building named after you, but a university does itself a service by choosing to honor individuals as great as [the Johnsons](#). “They are two of the finest people I have ever known,” Gibson said.



Nancy and Dr. Tim Johnson accepted the honor of cutting the ribbon at Friday's Johnson Center dedication ceremony.



*(Top) Dr. Tim Johnson, Charles Gibson, and Dr. Joseph Martin at Friday's symposium.
[See more photos from Friday's events.](#)*

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After the symposium, the crowd moved to the campus green in front of the Johnson Center for the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Carl Balsam, executive vice president and chief financial officer, and the two co-chairs of Campaign North Park, David S. Helwig and Dr. Johnson, spoke of the many pieces that were vital to the success of the project. Mary Surridge, vice president of development and alumni relations, affirmed the campaign's "promise to ensure the educational and spiritual advancement of North Park's mission." Parkyn then announced to the crowd as the Johnsons cut through the blue and yellow ribbon: "I am deeply pleased to declare the Johnson Center for Science and Community Life to be officially open for learning."

Moments like this continued throughout the weekend, including a festival following the ribbon cutting, and a dinner for President's Club members in Hamming Hall. At the dinner, Parkyn told the story of the dedication of Old Main, the first building on campus, 120 years ago this month. North Park's leaders spoke then of "a work just beginning," and Parkyn urged the crowd to "cast our vision beyond the horizon" and see North Park as still "a work just beginning." Parkyn added, "Tonight is a turning point in the history of North Park. The University stands taller today than she has ever stood, because today she stands on your shoulders."

On Saturday, the Johnson Center was opened to the public for a Community Open House, with guided tours for alumni, students, and the surrounding community, as well as an event for thirty-five prospective students. Among the group gathered to catch a glimpse of the new building was another set of Johnsons: alumni Anders and Samantha, and future North Parker, three-year-old Bjorn. "We've watched the building go up from the time it was just a hole in the ground," said Anders. "Together with the library and the green space, this is a further extension of the growth and beauty, as well as the educational opportunities, at North Park. So many of our friends and classmates went on to become doctors. For a small school, North Park makes a pretty significant contribution."

On Monday morning, Johnson returned the focus of the new building to its core mission of educating North Park's students with a lecture to undergraduates from across the University. Johnson reflected on his journey from North Park through the medical and media fields. "You are sitting here today and you might have a pretty good idea what you're going to do," Johnson said. "I want you to label that blueprint 'To Be Announced.' You will make decisions that will lead you in a number of different directions. You will get a great education while you are here. And hear me when I say, don't be afraid of the future."

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