



THIEL COLLEGE
Office of the President

**President's Remarks for the Olympus Athletic and Recreation Center
Groundbreaking
Saturday, May 9, 2026 @ 3:30 pm
Susan Traverso, President**

Good afternoon, and welcome to this remarkable day in the life of Thiel College.

Today's groundbreaking represents far more than the start of construction on a new facility. It reflects our belief in the future of this institution, in the strength of our region, and in the importance of creating spaces that bring people together in meaningful ways.

The Olympus Athletic and Recreation Center will serve as a place where students will compete, collaborate, grow healthier, and build lifelong connections. But its impact will extend well beyond our campus. This center will strengthen our ability to recruit and retain students, support regional wellness initiatives, and deepen partnerships throughout Mercer County and the Shenango Valley.

At Thiel College, we believe higher education has a responsibility not only to educate students, but to serve as a catalyst for opportunity and community development. Projects like this demonstrate that commitment. The Olympus Center will create opportunities for engagement, leadership development, and workforce preparation while serving as a welcoming space for students, families, alumni, and community members alike.

This moment would not be possible without extraordinary generosity and shared vision. Jim and Wanda Pedas, your leadership and belief in Thiel College have

helped turn an ambitious dream into a reality. Your investment is a powerful statement about the value of education, the importance of giving back, and the enduring strength of this community.

I also want to thank our Board of Trustees, our faculty and staff, our coaches, alumni, elected officials, and community partners who continue to believe in Thiel's mission and future.

Today we celebrate progress, partnership, and possibility. Most importantly, we celebrate what can happen when people come together in support of students and the communities they will one day lead.

Thank you for joining us for this historic occasion.