Virginia, members of the Bugliarello family, and friends of Polytechnic, I am humbled to share with you some memories of George Bugliarello.

The most difficult part of preparing my inadequate remarks was deciding what to leave out.

All men are born and die. A few men truly live. I consider myself fortunate to have known George Bugliarello – a man who truly lived. George lived a life filled with empathy and compassion for people – and a life which contributed to those institutions and individuals he touched.

My memories of George go back to the fall of 1973 when he became the eighth president of Polytechnic. The Institute had just completed a merger with the New York University School of Engineering and Science. The merger agreement called for selection of a new president of the new institution, Polytechnic Institute of New York. It also called for creation of a four person presidential advisory committee, of which I was a member.

George inherited a financially stressed institution, a faculty too large for the size of the student body and located in a neighborhood infected with the worst elements of urban decay.

He commenced his duties as president in October 1973 and following several months learning the strengths and weaknesses of the new institution the framework of a future vision of Polytechnic began to emerge.

The pillars of his plan were outlined on a paper towel on New Year’s Eve 1973 in Paddy’s Clam House, on 34th Street near Penn Station in Manhattan, where George and the four person advisory committee met. What emerged were three priorities, a stable platform, which would define much of George’s presidency.

- **First** we would increase enrollment through growth on satellite campuses. This was necessary to preserve faculty positions and jobs for staff, something always foremost in George’s mind when we encountered difficult times;
- **Second** we would begin something the Institute had been loathe to do – undertake organized fund raising;
- **Finally**, we needed to create a new campus for the flagship academic programs in Brooklyn.

It was under George’s leadership that undergraduate programs were introduced on Long Island in 1974. First on Hofstra’s campus and very quickly at the Long Island Center of
Polytechnic in Farmingdale. Within two years we began our first organized fund raising efforts beginning with a goal of $6 million over three years to replace the $6 million provided by New York State that would expire after the first three years of the merger. In the context of the time, $6 million was a large number. Our annual operating budget was less than $20 million and in 1976 tuition was only $2,500 per year.

[During this time the actor, Lee Majors, starred in a popular television series called the “Six Million Dollar Man”. George was affectionately referred to as Poly’s Six million Dollar Man.]

During George’s presidency between 1973 and 1994, $100 million was raised and Poly’s enrollment grew to over 5,600 students with more than 1,000 undergraduate students on Long Island. **Success on two of the three visionary fronts!**

But the most audacious of the three priorities emerging from the clam shells and chowder at Paddy’s Clam House was the commitment to building or finding a new campus for the Brooklyn component of Polytechnic. Four options were considered:

- **move** to Fort Hamilton near the Verrazano Bridge and Poly Prep, the pre-collegiate school that was once part of Polytechnic;
- **consolidate** everything at the Long Island Campus;
- **lease** several floors in the twin towers;
- **or work** with the City Fathers and the corporate sector to renew the area surrounding Poly by creating an urban corporate-university park to be known as the Metropolitan Technology Center, or MetroTech.

The fourth option was chosen and while it was a fifteen year project from concept to completion it became the largest urban corporate-university park in the country, boasting 22,000 corporate employees at its peak.

MetroTech, for some, is the defining achievement of George’s presidency. But it is much more than that. MetroTech has been the catalyst for downtown Brooklyn’s renewal, giving rise to the Fulton Mall, the Albee Mall, Atlantic Yards Development, the Brooklyn waterfront development and, of course, erecting the first new hotel in Brooklyn in more than 50 years, across the street from Polytechnic.

But George’s presidency was so much more multi-dimensional than even MetroTech.

Fund raising success and driving the MetroTech project required a strengthened Board of Trustees. It was in the early days of George’s presidency that the great benefactor and driving force of the Board, Joe Jacobs, was discovered. This three time alumnus of Poly was wooed back by George as a trustee and then as Board chairman. Joe would go on to contribute more than $35 million to Poly. George also patiently wooed Joe’s mentor, Donald Othmer, throughout his presidency. And, although the Othmer bequests were received after George stepped down as president, this $175 million gift, which at the time was the largest cash gift ever received by any university, would not have happened without the patience and courage of George who repeatedly resisted pressures to cut back
on the laboratory and secretarial resources devoted to a prominent, but nonetheless
retired, professor, while others were asked to bear the brunt of periods of financial
austerity.

The realization of the vision of MetroTech was accelerated by Poly’s successful
competition for a Center for Advanced Technology, CAT. Building on our strengths, the
theme of telecommunications emerged and George acquired the resources needed to
successfully compete for this center which became known as CATT (with two “Ts”). Telecommunications and our credibility in this area after receiving the CATT award was
what enabled us to attract the telecommunication-intensive companies that became the
tenants of MetroTech (Bear Sterns, Chase, SIAC, BUG, DoITT and the FDNY
headquarters).

Outside the Institute, George served on many corporate and foundation boards and
national and international advisory groups and he played a major role in the National
Academy of Engineering as has been summarized by Dr. Vest. He was also awarded
eight honorary degrees from prestigious universities.

Until his last days he never lost his enthusiasm for new ideas and sharing those ideas and
challenging colleagues and students to think. This is summarized in a note from a student
– “I wish everyone could have gotten to meet George. George really made me think.”
Encouraging people to think was always George’s primary teaching objective.

Finally, the full dimension of George would not be understood if we did not mention his
kindness to members of the Poly family who came upon tragedy and sadness in their life.
He always found time to be a consoling voice to those who were suffering at the loss of a
parent or spouse or child or to those who themselves were in their last days. I don’t have
to mention names, but many of you are here today and are from all stations of university
life.

I said “finally”, but I was just joking. There is always more to say about George.
We celebrate the Promise Scholarship fund annually. This outstanding fund raising
initiative began in 1988 when George was president and was led by trustees Clifford
Goldsmith and Henry Singer, whom George brought onto the Board.

There are also humorous moments to be shared. I’ll share just one of many with you
before closing. In the mid-eighties, a group of research faculty needed a VAX computer
to remain competitive in their area of research. I was vice president for research at the
time and we went to George to make the case for a VAX. George who prided himself in
being a good negotiator deliberated for a while about the V-A-X (VAX). He, however,
thought we were talking about two VACs (V-A-C-s) and asked if we could get by with
one VAC. There was, of course, no such thing as a VAC and it took great restraint to
contain our laughter. So we quickly said yes, and ended the meeting. We had our VAX.
George, of course, believed he had again won a negotiation through compromise.
Now, humor is best when all parties to the incident are aware of it. So more than 20 years later, in December 2008, on one of the many occasions when I had lunch with George, I told him this story. He got it; he laughed and then delivered his unexpected comeback. He said “Rich, I never told you this, but if you had not been so eager to leave you could have had two VAX.”

George’s leadership, collegiality, civility, ability to laugh at himself and his quick mind will be missed by me, personally, his family and all who enjoyed his company.

George truly lived and we have been enriched by his life.

Thank you.