

1-23-2018

## A Place of Possibilities

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### eCommons Citation

Spina, Eric F., "A Place of Possibilities" (2018). *President's Blog: From the Heart*. 98.  
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# A Place of Possibilities

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Tuesday January 23, 2018

By Eric F. Spina

When NCR announced its surprise move to Georgia, some people feared the former corporate headquarters would turn into a white elephant. Not former UD President Dan Curran. He saw the possibilities.

Today, the University announced it will rename the building “Daniel J. Curran Place” at a formal ceremony this spring in recognition of Dan’s ability to see such possibilities and seize them during his 14-year tenure as president. It’s a fitting recognition by the board of trustees and a decision I wholeheartedly support.

On the heels of the recession, Dan took a calculated, courageous risk and urged trustees to step up and buy the huge, vacant Fortune 500 headquarters along the Great Miami River. At that time, other universities around the nation were cutting budgets and leaving faculty and staff positions unfilled. Against that stark backdrop in higher education, we’d be bucking conventional wisdom by investing in an office building.

Dan and the trustees saw an unparalleled opportunity to transform the building into a center for world-class research, graduate education, and community outreach. Fiscally stable, strengthening academically, and growing, the University could afford to take the gamble, he argued.

It was a game-changing move that paved the way for extraordinary growth in sponsored research, an expanded leadership role in regional economic development, and room to grow for academic programs.

Just consider what's happened since the University bought and remediated a 50-acre parcel of NCR land in 2005, and followed that with the purchase of the company's world headquarters four years later.

In the interactive classrooms and modern labs in Raymond L. Fitz Hall, we're educating the next generation of educators, artists, musicians, physical therapists, physician assistants, nutritionists, and scientists in fields like electro-optics and photonics.

Global companies GE Aviation and Emerson built research and innovation centers on campus that provide high-tech jobs to hundreds of engineers and real-world laboratories for students and faculty. In the soon-to-be-named Daniel J. Curran Place, the University of Dayton Research Institute has achieved three consecutive years of remarkable growth, ending 2017 with a record \$136 million in sponsored research, and is poised to employ 600 researchers, technicians and support staff this year.

Those success stories are spurring even more development on the southern edge of the city. An exciting vision is beginning to take shape for the 38-acre former Montgomery County fairgrounds, which we purchased with Premier Health to continue the momentum of development and revitalization on the outskirts of downtown.

With tenacity and faith, Dan reimagined the University of Dayton's place in the community and the world. Like Brother Ray Fitz, S.M., and the Marianist leaders throughout history, he embraced change.

Daniel J. Curran Place will always stand as a testament to the power of possibilities.