With my wife Terri, I welcome seniors and their families to the Induction Ceremony for the 1954 Society. With each Commencement, I reflect upon the many contributions each student and their family have made to building a stronger Coastal Carolina University. Soon-to-be graduates, I hope that you, too, will have a moment to reflect upon the many ways this University has shaped your life as a student and your future as a learner of life.

Thanks to all of you and your peers, student service and selfless giving are thriving on this campus. For example…

• This year, 3,682 students have contributed more than 13,200 hours of voluntary community service. And student-athletes have tallied 350 additional hours.

• The University’s student-led Relay for Life efforts have engaged more than 1,000 participants who have generated more than $121,000, which is expected to be among the highest fund-raising efforts for the American Cancer Society among the nation’s universities.

• When junior recreation sport management major Thomas Cocke sought a way to remember both his late mother and two university staff members who used their personal money to help him get home for her funeral, he established the Travis E. Overton and Jacob M. Rosiek Student Benevolence Fund. The fund will provide support for other students who are dealing with a family-related crisis or a short-term emergency.

These remarkable demonstrations of giving and thanks provide a powerful testament to spirit of giving at Coastal Carolina University, which we celebrate today.

Seven years ago, the University initiated the 1954 Society, to recognize undergraduate students who have made a contribution of $19.54 or more to the University. This evening, we present these students with pins recognizing their support and commitment to their university. Wear this pin with pride and know that you are making a difference in the lives of students who will follow your footsteps. Thank you.

Toast to 1954 Society Inductees
Coastal Carolina University First Lady Terri DeCenzo
May 5, 2011

The meaning to be drawn from your achievement represents values deeper and causes greater than the achievement itself. May the growth of your spirit and the life of your mind always connect you to Coastal Carolina University and to each other. Realize that your presence here has enriched each of us and the history of the University. You leave us richer in intellect, richer in civility and richer in the warmth of humanity. Stay kind, be gentle, yet bold, remain connected and give fully and generously of yourselves to the world. This evening we celebrate you – and your contributions to the University and to each other. Tomorrow we celebrate your potential to change the world.