

**2023 SACHEM AWARD – ALBERT CHEN**  
**Governor Eric J. Holcomb**  
**November 2, 2023**

*Remarks as prepared for delivery*

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Thank you, Stephanie, and good morning, all!

It is indeed a pleasure to be in Carmel today as we set out to make some Hoosier history.

As you all well know, the SACHEM Award is the single highest honor any Indiana governor can ever give, reserved only for Hoosiers whose moral character and lifetimes of accomplishment have made incredible and indelible impacts in the lives of their fellow citizens.

During the past six years, it's been an absolute privilege for me to award the SACHEM to Holocaust survivor, the late Eva Mozes Kor, whose legacy continues to challenge and change hearts;

And U.S. Army Sergeant Sammy Davis, whose heroism extends beyond the battlefield to help his fellow veterans to this very day;

And Dr. George Rapp, who invented treatments, and built medical facilities around the world;

And Reggie Jones, Sr., who used his business success to create mentorships and scholarships;

And Jim Morris, who shaped our capital city skyline and helped feed millions of adults and orphans around the world;

And Pat Koch, who has dedicated her life to keeping the spirit of Christmas alive all year long as Santa Claus, Indiana's Chief Elf;

And today we're here to add another onto the very short list of names forever engraved in our state capitol because they are indeed the very best among us.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it's both a personal and professional honor to bestow our state's highest honor, for the 18th time in Indiana history, to Mr. Albert Chen.

Albert is the epitome of what it means to be a Hoosier – kind, humble, hard-working, inspirational, innovative and a change-maker.

In many ways he is unassuming and displays humility beyond measure.

And one can't help but feel uplifted after talking to Albert, who is very intentional, always with a quick wit.

Looking out over this room, I can tell he has left a permanent impression on so many.

And although Indiana is not where his journey started, we are so glad his journey brought him to the Heart of the Heartland.

Albert's extraordinary life story is one of adversity overcome, through incredibly hard work and a relentless pursuit of his dreams.

It's a story of a self-made man, who took the hand he was dealt, sought and seized every opportunity, persevered against the odds and eventually realized his dreams.

Along the way, he devoted his life to investing in other people, touching thousands of lives, many in profound ways, by giving so many the opportunities and encouragement they needed to achieve their own dreams.

And as far as his journey has taken him, and as high as he's climbed, "Lending a hand to help someone else succeed" has remained his motto and mission.

Maybe that's because he's never forgotten his own roots.

Growing up in Taiwan amidst political struggle and turmoil, Albert spent a period of his childhood homeless, sometimes without shoes, and holes in his jeans.

Which he would tell you now, he was just ahead of "that cool trend" by a few years or so!

Instead of declaring bankruptcy when his father's construction firm hit hard times, Albert's father made a big sacrifice and sold all of his personal property in order to fund and fulfill his commitment to building dormitories for students attending the local university.

So, from a very young age, Albert saw the value of integrity, and keeping a promise.

He did not view this as a setback, but as an imperative life lesson that he uses to guide his everyday life – when you make a commitment, you deliver on it.

Determined to make a better life for himself and his family, he hopped on his steel horse (what we here in America would call a bicycle) and rode it every day for 20 miles – one way – to school, because an education and thirst for learning is something Albert knew he could take with him wherever life would lead him next.

And he worked hard enough and long enough to save enough money to book a ticket to America.

At the age of 25, Albert took an intercontinental leap of faith into the unknown, the west coast.

After obtaining a degree from Portland State University, he landed his first job at General Telephone & Electronics Corporation, where he would spend the next 13 years managing various research teams.

He had numerous mentors, colleagues and friends who trusted in him, believed in him and encouraged him to be confident in his abilities, even when numbers came better than words.

It certainly speaks to Albert's adaptable nature, and his acceptance of every challenge as an opportunity to grow – not to be the best, but to be his personal best.

And when time for a promotion came in 1979 to become a regional supply chain manager, Albert took it.

The job required a big move to this state in the Midwest called Indiana.

And Albert, we're so glad you planted your roots in the Hoosier state!

It was here he built Telamon, a telecommunication company that supports connectivity and infrastructure needs.

And although our digital world has evolved since Telamon first opened its doors, from a landline to a mobile phone, Telamon's connectivity network spans multiple industries and impacts nearly every facet of our everyday life, allowing us to connect with each other and the services that keep our world in motion.

What started as two employees in 1985 with just Albert and his loving wife, Margaret, Telamon has grown into one of the largest privately-held companies in Indiana.

While the company remains successful, to the tune of over \$839 million dollars, Albert has never been concerned about the money.

His focused success has enabled him to support all those around him, with his unstoppable desire to help people maximize their own true potential, just as he had been supported by so many on his journey.

Which is fitting, as "Telamon" is derived from the Greek word "support."

You can see it as he walks the halls of Telamon, engaging with his employees like old friends, working on their next big discovery.

Ask Albert what the difference is between the Telamon in 1985 to the Telamon now, and he'll say "nothing."

Founded on 4 principles – honesty, simplicity, harmony and stewardship – Telamon is a company that connects people to the world with integrity and purpose, a mission that Albert has fulfilled throughout all of his life, and a worthy cause that withstands the test of time.

And what I just love about Albert is that he takes zero credit for the success.

He praises the efforts of his colleagues and their devotion to this noble cause.

And they certainly have a great role model to look up to in someone who truly believes in them.

Albert's story reminds me of one of my favorite quotes displayed on my desk.

It reads, “There is no limit to what a man can do or where he can go if he doesn’t mind who gets the credit.”

And Albert, your accomplishments are certainly limitless and extend beyond Telamon’s walls.

You’ve given your time, talent and treasure to numerous worthwhile causes that all ultimately empower our future leaders and support their personal development.

I know you truly believe in the power of a quality education, and that’s why you support academic scholarships for minority students to attend universities in Indiana and at your alma mater Portland State University.

But that’s far from all.

Albert has founded not one, but two non-profits, including the Asian-American Alliance and the America-China Society of Indiana, to create opportunities for growth, foster critical relationships outside our borders and to be an advocate for Asian-Americans living in the Hoosier state.

It’s this understanding of the importance of embracing partnerships that are rooted in educational exchanges, and economic and cultural connections, that because of Albert’s efforts, he encourages us all to embrace our differences and learn from one another.

And reminds us to extend warm Hoosier Hospitality to everyone we meet and to pay forward the help you’ve been given, because no one can grow alone.

Now I know Albert will be the first to admit he has had help along the way.

First, his unwavering faith and belief that God has always had a hand in shaping his life and would never lead him astray is something that has filled Albert’s heart with peace and thankfulness.

But the Lord has also provided so many more blessings to Albert throughout his lifetime, none more important than his greatest support and strongest partner, his soulmate and wife, Margaret.

Margaret and Albert have accomplished and helped so many together.

And some of their greatest accomplishments are here with us today.

They're the parents of 2 children, Stan and Stephanie, and grandparents to 5 grandchildren.

So, in closing, I know this is far from the only award Albert Chen has received, displayed or has framed on his walls.

Between all those awards and his robust horse collection, I'm not sure much else can fit in his office!

As Albert proudly might tell you, he was born in the "year of the horse," which so fittingly describes his approach to life as a leader, trailblazer, and most importantly, of his generosity and loyalty to all he holds dear.

As a first-generation immigrant, Albert's character is a strong testament to his perseverance and bravery to take a giant leap.

And his entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to give back to his community is everything a Hoosier should strive to be.

So, Albert, thank you for inspiring so many with your tenacious work ethic and constant pursuit to reach back and guide those up who follow in your footsteps.

For *all* these reasons, and so many more, it's my honor today to joyfully present the 2023 Sachem Award to a great Hoosier, Albert Chen.

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