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Fleming Fields Recreational Sports Park Dedication
Fleming Fields Recreational Sports Park
31st and Leighton Avenue
Thursday, June 24, 2004
John C. Owens
NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor

It is a real treat for me to be here today on behalf of the university as we dedicate Fleming Fields Recreational Sports Park. As Vice Chancellor of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, I am especially pleased to be able to take part in honoring the memory of Jim, Bob, and Dave Fleming, three outstanding University of Nebraska graduates.

While I only arrived in Nebraska about three and a half years ago and never had the opportunity to know the Fleming brothers, I have such tremendous respect for their work, as well as both awe and high regard for the wonderful legacies they left us.

Our work in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at UNL is work that helps grow Nebraska. Those who

share a passion for and a dedication to growing for the good of Nebraska and its citizens are dear to each our hearts. It's apparent Jim, Bob, and Dave Fleming were such people. Naming this park for them is a fine and a fitting recognition of the Fleming brothers, nationally renowned for their work in hybridizing ornamental landscape plants.

If you visit East Campus where the Institute is located, you'll find The Fleming Slope on the east side of our Food Industry Complex building – better known as the building housing the ice cream store. The Fleming Slope is a place of beauty honoring the brothers' contributions to horticulture. It's a restful place where we all can pause for a moment of peace or quiet reflection.

I understand that the master plan for this park includes a display garden of plants hybridized by the Flemings. What a fitting tribute to the Fleming brothers that will be, and what a great gift to all of us! Jim, Bob, and Dave Fleming have truly left us a living legacy in the many delicate and sturdy, pastel and

flamboyant plants they worked with over the years, plants that provide joyous bursts of color that gladden the heart, are a feast for the eyes, and a great and glorious boost for the spirit.

An article in the Feb. 15, 2002 "American Nurseryman" magazine said this about the Fleming brothers: "It was always understood by the brothers that cashing-in on their hybridizing – success was of minimal importance. Their goal, first and foremost, was to dedicate themselves fully to the art and science of hybridization. *The round-robin of ideas circulating between these hybridizers and others in the trade was similar to a coming together of genius painters or artists to enhance the color of life.*"

"Genius painters ... to enhance the color of life." What a tribute, what an accomplishment, and what a legacy.

The Fleming brothers gave those of us who live in a world made more beautiful by their work a marvelous gift. The dedication, passion, and joy they felt for and in their work is an example for each of us. It is a pleasure and an honor to be here today on behalf of the university as we dedicate the Fleming

Fields Recreational Sports Park for Jim, Bob, and Dave Fleming, on this site where Bob and Dave began operating Fleming Flower Fields back in 1947. Thank you for letting me be part of it.

Thank you.

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