



Mandela Washington Fellowship Summit

AUGUST 3-4, 2021 | VIRTUAL

Leadership for the Future: Resilience and Inclusion

Plenary Congressional Welcome: Joni Ernst Transcript

Speakers

- Joni Ernst, U.S. Senator, Iowa

Session Transcript

Hi folks, this is Senator Joni Ernst, junior senator for the great state of Iowa. While I'm sorry I can't be with you all in person today, I'm honored to share a few words at the 2021 Mandela Washington Fellowship Summit. Since 2014, the Mandela Washington Fellowship has helped shape the next generation of African leaders across government, business, and civil society. And this year, I'm so glad that all of you have had this tremendous opportunity to forge long-term relationships and collaboratively tackle challenges in both the United States and Africa.

Today, I'd like to congratulate you on your completion of an intensive six weeks of Leadership Institutes. As a proud Iowan, I'd like to give a special shout-out to both the Drake University and University of Iowa Fellows. As dynamic and diverse young leaders from 49 countries across Africa, it's important each and every one of you continue your exemplary servant leadership in order to help your community survive and thrive in the months and years to come. Something I've taught my daughter over the years, instructed my soldiers in, and have strived to live out every day myself are four key principles (or pillars): service, leadership, gratitude, and prudent risk. And I encourage you all to do the same. Serve your family, community, and state; lead by example; always find something to be grateful for; and even though it might be scary, assume prudent risk.

My final piece of advice is to be the subject matter expert. Whatever your passion is, know that passion inside and out. Know what the advocates are advocating for, and know what the naysayers are going to push back against, and then know how to debate it properly. Own the room. As our next generation of leaders, you all represent a bright future for your communities. Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to share a few words today, and if I can ever be of assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out.

