

Chancellor speaks at Fall Convocation

FORT WORTH, TX

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Thank you, Dr. Donovan. I'd like to take a few moments to thank the TCU Concert Chorale for a wonderful beginning to today's Convocation. Whether performing "Brahm's Requiem" in Carnegie Hall or singing in a Christmas production with Skitch Henderson's New York Pops, the TCU choirs have taken a prominent place in the nation's music spotlight. They are particular favorites of both the American Choral Directors Association and the Texas Music Educators Association — and they are certainly our favorites!

We come together today to celebrate the beginning of TCU's 133rd year and the vibrant academic life that is at the center of our mission. Today, we also pause to recognize the University's founders, Addison and Randolph Clark, with our Founders Celebration. TCU grew from the vision of these courageous brothers in the tumultuous period after the Civil War. Much of the best about our university can be traced to these two thoughtful brothers. One faculty member in particular, Dr. Sherrie Reynolds, from our School of Education has spent considerable time educating many students and me on the rich history that is the saga of Texas Christian University. Today she and members of her fall classes and my class are all wearing special buttons that read, "Ask me about the history of TCU." I encourage you to do just that if you see one of our students after today's convocation.

TCU's forerunner, AddRan Male & Female College, began on the first Monday of September in 1873 with 13 pupils. It was a radical experiment, for it was among the first schools of higher education to teach young men and young women co-educationally. Of that humble beginning, Randolph Clark wrote: "In fact there was no school; it was only a purpose formed in the mind, a matter of faith." His vision was to found a "strong academy" where students would be taught "how to study, to be given a purpose in life and a foundation on which to build character."

We launch our academic year and celebrate our founding with excitement and enthusiasm — but also with sadness for members of the TCU community whose lives have been swept up by the winds and waters of Hurricane Katrina. We have been working closely with the 54 TCU students who are from the Gulf Coast region, and they remain in our hearts and in our prayers. We invited students from colleges or universities closed as a result of Katrina to enroll here this semester. Today I extend the University's heartiest welcome to 42 new members of the TCU family from Tulane, Xavier, Dillard, Loyola, Southeastern Louisiana universities and William Carey College. Many of our faculty, staff and students are joining in the outpouring of support for those whose lives have been impacted by the hurricane. I invite you to visit the TCU Web site, where you can learn of the many ways to help.

For all those who are new here — whether you are among more than 300 transfer students, our nearly 1,600 freshmen or a new faculty or staff member — you have come to a unique place... a place that a century and a third later, still reflects the purpose and values of our founders. TCU continues to be a place where — in Randolph Clark’s words — you can study, you can search for a purpose in life, and you can develop the foundations of character.

When I first arrived at TCU in the summer of 2003, I was repeatedly asked my vision for TCU. But I truly felt I was not here to assign a vision until I knew your dreams and aspirations for this great university. Vision in Action, our strategic planning effort, allowed me to benefit from the voices of more than 800 faculty and staff members, students, Trustees and alumni. I would like to thank Provost Nowell Donovan and Dr. Leo Munson, who took on the daunting task of co-chairing this important effort, as well as all of you who participated.

Now, at last, the planning phase of Vision in Action is complete, and I have reviewed the vast amount of information that this strategic planning study has produced. The most remarkable conclusion is a hearty reaffirmation of TCU’s mission: to educate ethical leaders and responsible citizens in the global community. Further, I believe that TCU is one of the few institutions anywhere with the potential to deliver a world-class, value-centered university experience. In today’s uncertain world, TCU not only has the potential — but also the obligation — to educate ethical leaders for the global community.

This university, our University, is at its best when we say to a potential student, “Come study with us here in the heart of Fort Worth and the experience will change your life.” I am convinced that we can educate our students better than any other university — including prestigious Ivy League institutions. Our objective now is to launch the initiatives that will secure our niche in American higher education into the future.

I would like to share with you now the five strategic directions that have emerged from Vision in Action:

First, we will reaffirm our commitment to undergraduate education.

Second, we will enrich the campus living experience.

Third, we will develop stronger and higher-profile graduate programs.

Fourth, we will further nurture an environment rich in personal interaction.

And fifth, we will better serve Fort Worth as it strives to become a world-class city.

As we adopt these strategies, I am confident that TCU’s future rests not in imitating other universities — though we can learn much from others. Instead, our future

lies in refining the essential TCU, a great institution that was born and grew on the frontier... that became the school of choice for West Texas residents... and that matured into one of the top 100 national universities. Now, we must expand our vision to fit a new time and a new position in the world for our nation and for our graduates.

We have choices: like most of the other 2,900 baccalaureate-granting institutions in the United States, we could chase the rankings... Along with the other schools, we could target the finite pool of students scoring at the very pinnacle of standardized test scores... And we could go after the most elite faculty whose reputations grow from their research prowess, though they may never teach a student below the post-doctoral level. But I believe we must stake our future upon our own terms, on TCU's unique strengths and unique vision. Reputation and rankings will follow excellence.

We must refine the essential TCU. As Provost Nowell Donovan notes, we must connect "our origins to our future." We must make what is the best of this institution even better. And we must address those problems that make TCU less than it can be. In the words of the Provost, our future must be characterized by "high quality, brave visions and high purposes."

The German philosopher and poet Goethe observed: "Dream no small dreams for they have no power to move the hearts of men."

We must dream great dreams if we are to realize our preferred future — our ideal future. And we must move the hearts of many if we are to succeed.

Let me share just three of these great dreams that have arisen from Vision in Action and will build upon our theme of delivering a:

World-Class...Value-Centered...Total University Experience.

First, our dreams include elevation of our School of Music to the world-class level. In piano, Fort Worth, with its Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, is already there. Our own piano program draws students of the first rank from across the globe — students such as the piano program's two 2005 Fulbright Scholars, Paul Sanchez and Sandra Doan. Consequently, we dream of a music complex on the Berry Street campus. With two performance halls, this facility would elevate our music school, fill a vital cultural need of North Texas, and further boost the renaissance of the historic Berry Street corridor.

Second, our dreams as specified in Vision in Action include a focus on the value-centered mission of producing ethical and responsible leaders, we will elevate the Schieffer School of Journalism to one of the top schools in the nation. Renowned broadcast journalist and TCU graduate Bob Schieffer '59 has observed: "In this time of unprecedented access to information, there is an unprecedented need for journalists who are ethical and responsible," and he has committed to becoming a hands-on influence at the Schieffer School. I will share just a few of the exciting initiatives: a named prize in

journalism ethics; a store-front, student-run ad agency that will provide pro bono services for non-profit organizations; a Community Journalism Institute for small-town journalists; an annual Schieffer symposium and lecture series, building upon last spring's stellar symposium on the state of American Journalism; and much more. One future consideration may well be a new facility, a media center for the Schieffer School.

Third, the dream of a Campus Commons project perfectly illustrates TCU's emphasis on the total university experience. A TCU education is not just the sum of semester hours, but an entire experience that grows from our mission. Creating a nexus between the academic departments and student life and campus living initiatives, the project will comprise the construction of the University Union, a renovation of the present Brown-Lupton Student Center and the existing residence halls. The Brown-Lupton renovation will create much needed space for several academic departments, as well as a home for Career Services, University Ministries and the Leadership Center.

These possibilities are exciting... and each of the other schools and colleges has its own ambitious agenda to raise its academic profile while serving the greater good. For example, the School of Education plans an institute for urban education in its new Education Complex. The M.J. Neeley School of Business is developing the Neeley Fellows honors program, along with initiatives focused on ethics and leadership. AddRan College is enhancing both its Center for Civic Literacy and Center for Texas Studies. The College of Health & Human Services will focus its research initiatives upon a new Center for Health and Human Development, which will be designed for community outreach. The College of Science & Engineering is establishing a leadership minor in conjunction with the Neeley School and Campus Life.

No less groundbreaking are several campuswide initiatives for the next decade and a half.

We will strengthen the teacher-scholar model.

Since I've been at TCU, I've met graduates from Manhattan to Midland and from the Classes of 1945 to 2005. What is truly remarkable is the value that they place on the relationships that they have had with their professors. These connections have been — and will continue to be — at the center of the TCU experience and differentiate us from so many other universities where teaching isn't highly prized. These relationships result from TCU's teacher-scholar model, through which we seek out professors who have a passion for teaching as well as for conducting research that keeps them at the top of their fields.

In recent years, expanded class size has been an unwelcome result of a very positive trend — the continuing popularity of TCU among potential students and their families. For the fifth consecutive year, we saw a record number of applicants for this fall's freshman class: more than 8,100 applicants for 1,550 spaces. As enrollment has slowly crept upward, it has become increasingly difficult to deliver the personalized university experience that is TCU's hallmark.

The Board of Trustees took a significant step forward last spring by authorizing the capping of undergraduate enrollment at the current 7,200, along with the measured, incremental growth of our graduate programs over the next decade. Further, they declared a public re-commitment to our residential heritage at TCU...affirming that, "On-campus living provides unique opportunities designed to ensure student experience, successful graduation, and a lifelong relationship with the University."

To further improve the TCU experience and to align the University with other selective schools, I propose that we reduce the faculty/student ratio to 13 to 1 from the current 14.7 to 1. While this is an ambitious goal, it is an attainable one. Since 2003, we have added 41 new faculty positions. In order to reach the 13 to 1 ratio, we will need 59 additional positions.

Adding endowed faculty positions will further strengthen TCU and the teacher-scholar model. We are fortunate to have 44 endowed chairs and professorships. In line with the recommendations of Vision in Action, I propose that we expand that number by 10 endowed positions for a total of 54. These positions are included in the total of 59 new positions that I mentioned earlier.

As we expand the faculty, we must simultaneously protect and foster the culture that is unique to TCU, while attracting individuals who will bring new ideas, added vigor and a huge dose of excitement to this university.

We will better recruit students who will most benefit from a TCU education.

We are fortunate in that our student population boasts many better-than-average students with high leadership potential. Our Chancellor's Scholars epitomize this ideal. Currently, TCU has 49 Chancellor's Scholars, only a dozen in each class. I propose that we expand the program to include 160 Chancellor's Scholars by 2020.

The Community Scholars Program, in partnership with a number of city high schools, also provides TCU with outstanding students. Since its first class enrolled in 2000, 95 Community Scholars have enriched not only their own lives, but also the TCU community as a whole. By all measures, the program has been a smashing success, enhancing recruitment, retention and campus diversity. I propose that we double the number of Community Scholars by 2020, increasing from our current number of 65 to a total of 130.

We will further improve TCU's facilities.

Since academic year 2000-2001, TCU has made remarkable improvements to the physical campus totaling some \$190 million. The University has constructed a number of new facilities and has spent \$36.8 million on reshoring the undergraduate teaching spaces. Yet our work is not complete. Vision in Action has highlighted the need to continue to upgrade the spaces where our students, faculty and staff study, work, live and play.

The School of Education Complex is among our highest priorities. This summer, along with other staff members, I spent considerable time on fund raising - visiting alumni, foundation representatives, parents and other TCU constituencies. We have now raised nearly \$6 million toward the \$10.2 million to completely renovate the Bailey Building and add an adjacent, state-of the-art education facility. I am confident that we soon will reach our \$10.2 million goal. We also have seen success with the University Union component of the Campus Commons project, including a \$5-million lead gift. In addition, we have received a \$350,000 gift to fund a TCU heritage center within the union that will celebrate the University's history and traditions. Barnes & Noble will soon renovate the TCU Bookstore. And soon we can turn our attention to another desperate need: renovation of the Ballet Building for our renowned dance program.

During the summer, we completed fund raising for the Veterans Plaza, a campus beautification project that will honor Horned Frogs who have served our nation in the armed forces. Stretching from Reed Hall, across University Drive to the Beasley Mall, the serene plaza, financed by generous donors, will be enjoyed by generations of students to come. I hope that you will attend the Nov. 12 dedication of this new campus landmark, which has garnered overwhelming support from TCU's alumni and friends. And I am sure you have admired the lovely Ray Gates that now mark TCU's campus border at the corner of Bellaire and Stadium Drive, a gift of alumnus Jerry Ray and his wife, Betty.

It is clear that we indeed have great dreams. Realizing the goals of Vision in Action and transforming those dreams to reality will require considerable resources. For example, the 10 new endowed faculty positions will require additional endowment funds of \$15 million. Quadrupling the number of Chancellor's Scholars will require an additional \$3.4 million each year, which will necessitate growing the endowment by \$48 million. Doubling the number of Community Scholars will cost \$1.5 million more than is annually expended on the program today.

We have three sources to fund these ambitious initiatives. First, the Board of Trustees has provided an increase in the annual operating budget. Second, we have a modest "venture capital" fund started with \$1.8 million this year — called the Strategic Initiatives Fund — to underwrite projects that Vision in Action deemed to have potential to transform the University. Thus far, grants have underwritten financial aid for graduate students, support for the Successful Graduation Initiative and an interdisciplinary expansion of the Adoption Project, now known as the Center for Child Development. Third, the Board of Trustees has authorized the planning phase of a new comprehensive fund-raising campaign that is being organized by our new vice chancellor for Advancement, Donald J. Whelan, Jr.

As you can see, Vision in Action has delivered an impressive agenda, convincing me TCU has a brighter future today than at any other point in our collective history.

That bright future will be built by:

Our outstanding and committed faculty and staff,

Students who really want to change the world for the better,

Trustees who guide us diligently,

And graduates and other friends who are willing to support us emotionally, intellectually and financially.

Thank you for being here today, and for all you do to make this such a great university. In particular I would like to thank the students in my freshman seminar for attending this Convocation — not just for extra credit points, but also for the sheer love of all that is Texas Christian University.

Before we recognize the winners of the Wassenich and Chancellor's awards, I would like to leave you with one more thought, the words of Victor Hugo:

“The future has several names. For the weak it is impossible. For the faint hearted it is unknown. For the thoughtful and valiant, it is ideal.”

The most important factor in creating TCU's ideal future is you.

It is now my pleasure to present the 2005 Wassenich Award for Mentoring in the TCU Community. Because of their own rich experiences as students, Mark and Linda Wassenich established this unique honor in 1999. It highlights the value TCU places on key relationships that faculty and staff develop with their students — relationships that help our students develop, succeed, and contribute to their communities.

The Wassenich family is very important to TCU and has played a vital role in the University's progress. Dr. Paul Wassenich, Mark's father, was a longtime professor of undergraduate religion and founder of the TCU Honors Program, and Mark's mother, Ruth Wassenich, provided distinguished service to the Mary Couets Burnett Library. Dr. Wassenich passed away earlier this year — a great loss to the entire TCU family. We are honored that Mark and Linda Wassenich and Ruth Wassenich are with us today.

The Wassenich Award recognizes a member of the faculty and staff who has made a significant difference as a mentor in the lives of students and carries a cash value of \$2,500. This year, four finalists were selected by the committee, which was charged with reviewing a large number of nominees.

I am pleased to ask this year's finalists to stand:

Mr. Jack Hesselbrock

Dr. Nadia Lahutsky

Dr. Mike Sacken and

Dr. Steve Weis

Often it is the telling detail that best illuminates a story. So it is with the story of this year's Wassenich Award winner. I would like to share two stories that epitomize this professor's relationship with students and, in fact, TCU's tradition of mentoring.

An appreciative student recalls: "After I got a frustrating grade on a paper in my sophomore composition class, this professor asked me one simple question: Do you want to make your writing better? When I answered yes, she volunteered to let me bring her any of my papers. She'd offer editorial comments. (Little did I know how copious they'd be!) And then I could revise the papers before turning them in for my classes. She expected my best writing ever... She got it."

Another classmate remembers: "I entered TCU quiet, shy, lacking in confidence and tentative to share thoughts. Through this professor's classroom culture — an atmosphere of inclusiveness and pointed inquiry — all students, including the reticent ones — were encouraged to share ideas. Empowerment and confidence became not just abstract concepts, but lived experiences."

The student continues: "Dr. Lahutsky establishes a personal connection with all of her students, and it is this personal connection that enabled me to grow as a writer, a speaker and a scholar."

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my privilege to present this year's Wassenich Award for Mentoring in the TCU Community to Dr. Nadia Lahutsky, associate professor of religion, AddRan College of Humanities & Social Sciences.

It is a great privilege to present the 2005 Chancellor's Award for Distinguished Achievement as a Creative Teacher and Scholar.

It should come as no surprise that the selection of this year's recipient was a very difficult task. I congratulate each college and school nominee on your selection by your colleagues and thank each of you for your contributions to the intellectual vitality and reputation of the University.

The school nominees are:

Dr. Michael Dodson, AddRan College (Political Science)

Dr. In Mu Haw, M.J. Neeley School of Business (Accounting)

Dr. Claudia V. Camp, AddRan College (Religion)

Dr. Melissa J. Young, College of Communication (Communication Studies)

Professor Curtis W. Wilson, College of Fine Arts (Music)

Dr. Ken Richardson, College of Science & Engineering (Mathematics)

Dr. Dennis J. Cheek, College of Health and Human Sciences (Nursing and Nursing Anesthesia)

Dr. Cathy Collins Block, School of Education

Earlier, I spoke of two characteristics of this university on which we rest our plans for future distinction — the strength of the teacher-scholar model and the potential for TCU to deliver a world-class educational experience. This year's recipient of the Chancellor's Award epitomizes both. This professor makes a difference in the lives of students and the greater society, combining a passion for teaching with a reputation as one of the premier literacy educators in the world.

Every semester for the past 29 years, teaching evaluations have ranked her in the "excellent level of performance." Yet she videotapes her classes every semester so that she can further refine her teaching techniques.

Her teaching has been emulated by her students when they become teachers themselves. Thus her teaching and scholarship have positively impacted America's current as well as future kindergarten-to-grade-12 students and teachers. As a member of the University of Notre Dame's prestigious National Graduate Faculty for five summers, she was the first faculty member to receive the university's Christ in Teaching Award for Distinguished Teaching.

She has authored or co-authored 82 professional standardized tests, books and textbooks. Her books are among the most widely read works in the field of literacy. She is the co-author of *Power Thinking for Leaders*, a book that was the #1 selling management/leadership book in the United States in February 2004. It has been translated into Japanese and Russian and negotiations are under way for translations into Arabic.

She is the co-author of the Stanford Early School Achievement Test, a test taken by hundreds of thousands of elementary students each year. She is also co-author of the Yale Assessment of Thinking, which has been administered to more than 70,000 professionals in fields ranging from business to healthcare. Her influence extends from our campus to the White House, where she has advised President Bush about education, to countries across the world where her books have been published.

A colleague notes: "When one reads the hundreds of positive comments and letters of this professor's students over three decades, one realizes her life's work has always been about others. She is so successful because she considers the success of her students and colleagues to be the foundation of her career in the classroom. She ... creates a climate that inspires her students to use their knowledge and skills to enhance the lives of others."

Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to present the 2005 Chancellor's Award for Distinguished Achievement as a Creative Teacher and Scholar — an award carrying a cash value of \$20,000 — to Dr. Cathy Collins Block, professor of education, School of Education.