Good afternoon, Friends.

Straight-away, I'd like to thank you all for coming on this spectacular day to celebrate Haverford College—our traditions and history; our aspirations and future. I am honored by your presence and the College is sustained by the participation of so many dedicated people.

I'd also like to thank each of the speakers for their kind words as well as their perceptive (and occasionally impertinent) observations. These friends represent the many threads that weave this community into a single fabric. In fact, community is the overarching theme that has worked its way this past week through all of the activities celebrating creativity and the human spirit. I'd like to explain how we arrived at that theme and what I think it means, both to me personally and to Haverford College.

Everyone who is familiar with academics will know that we have committees for every conceivable purpose, and planning this inauguration was no exception. [W.O. Douglas story] Guided brilliantly by Violet Brown and Aryeh Kosman, the committee considered a variety of approaches to staging the event. First, we realized that the inauguration is not about me as an individual. It is about Haverford College, all of its accomplishments, and all of its people. With this idea as a base, we decided that rather than focusing on this inaugural hour, we would have a whole week of events that showcased the work of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the College.

It has been a full week indeed. From sports to music to the visual arts to science to values in education: I think this iridescent display of the talents of our people reveals the vibrancy of this community.

The committee also pondered ways to present the inaugural ceremony itself. One thought was to express all the ideas we had in mind through music. Music after all is a universal language, able to touch people's deepest emotions, and has the singular advantage of avoiding the dreaded long and deadly-dull speeches that endanger such occasions. Unfortunately, we anticipated two problems. First, how could we possibly come to consensus on which music given the endless variety of tastes and styles? Second, and more problematic, music also has the capacity to readily bring tears to my eyes. I'm sure
most of you would forgive me for crying in public, but we don't really want a photograph in the newspaper captioned "the sniffing president."

We also considered accomplishing the inauguration as a Quaker Meeting. This format would be true to the heritage and origins of the College. Thus, we could have conducted the affair in respectful silence, broken only by the calling to speak that any member of the assemblage might feel. While genuinely appealing, our pedantic urges suggested that this approach might be a bit impractical, even if deliciously unpredictable in its outcome.

In the end, we decided to follow a traditional format. In fact, I believe traditions are important. They demonstrate our rootedness in those people and those events that came before us, and traditional academic celebrations allow us to demonstrate publicly that we are in fact carrying out the educational mission so needed in our society. So the format you see before you is what you would have seen when Tom Kessinger was inaugurated in 1988, or Robert Stevens ten years before that, and presumably many of my eleven predecessors over the past 164 years of this great college.

With format settled, we needed a unifying theme. I have always been intrigued and uplifted by the idea of the indomitable human spirit, the astonishing ability of people to accomplish great deeds, to come through under extreme duress, and to accomplish things no one thought possible. Others on the inaugural committee talked with passion about human creativity, about inventiveness, and about our species' ability to imagine. In this way, then, was born our theme for the week: Creativity and the Human Spirit.

This is, of course, a vast subject and intentionally so. It is meant to encompass all that we do here so that together we can display, discuss, debate, explore, research, teach, and celebrate the creative spirit of the entire Haverford community. And that very word—community—seems to me to be the focal concept that runs throughout all that we did this week and underscores the foundation of our creative and spirited lives together.

Let me describe the Haverford community through three different lenses, much the way Curt Cacioppo's *Fanfare* employed a tritone pattern. Then at the end I will draw together those images into a final view.
First and foremost, we are an **intellectual community**.

The College was founded in 1833 to promote “a liberal education in the ancient and modern literature and the mathematical and natural sciences under the care of competent instructors” (Rufus M. Jones, in *Haverford College: A History and an Interpretation*, Macmillan, New York, 1933). While we might wish a more enthusiastic description of faculty than merely “competent”, little more need be said about our educational aspirations.

We take scholarship seriously. The most important thing we can give our students is the ability and the inclination to intersect life and its many challenges as a scholar: with hard questions in hand; with an open mind to what the answers might be; with an insistence that assertions and conclusions must be backed up by evidence, not merely opinion; with a desire not just to advance our progress toward solutions, but to make those solutions public and to subject them to the bracing reality of open debate.

In demonstration of this commitment, every year at commencement we invite honorary degree recipients to share their lives and their questions, and thus model what the life of the intellect is all about. We join Cornel West in the challenge of preserving humane values in a market culture. We join feminist psychologist Carol Gilligan in remapping the world, looking at life through the eyes of women. We take on the question of Ela Bhatt, advocate of poor working women in India, who asks why for millions of people in the world, the reality of “development” has become not a solution, but a curse. And we hear environmental scientist F. Sherwood Rowland remind us of something we may know but don’t want to hear: the fact that the average family of four in the United States does as much damage to the global environment as a village of 1,000 in Bangladesh.

Apropos of these friends who have provoked thought on our campus, my view is that in a truly intellectual community, no subjects are off limits. We cannot be afraid to challenge cherished notions or to be wary of being unpopular for insisting on bright illumination of risky topics. I do not underestimate or minimize the importance of diplomacy and courtesy and civility in our discourse. These attributes in fact are vital. However, I also think that an unwillingness to be direct with each other or a hesititation to engage in real debate, can layer a thick and impenetrable crust over our attempts at betterment.

Thus, in this intellectual community we heed the words of the Ibo
proverb: “Taking thought is strength.”

Second, Haverford is an **intentional community**.

Things do not often happen to us by accident. We do not have to be subject to the vicissitudes of vagary. We chart our own future. We make choices that define who we are and what we want to accomplish.

For example, we have chosen throughout our 164-year history to be a liberal arts college. There were and are other forms we could assume, especially in areas of the curriculum that deal with professional disciplines like health care, business, social work, architecture, engineering and journalism, among many others. These are worthy pursuits, and surely the world needs good people to pursue them as many Haverford alumni have, but I believe that the training one attains in these areas and the contributions one makes as a practitioner can be no better than the liberal education on which they rest. This is why we have intentionally chosen to keep our focus sharp and to define at our core a commitment to broad-based and rigorous liberal arts.

We have also intentionally chosen to be small. We are mindful that there are certain advantages to largeness: economies of scale in operating the institution; the ability to offer more choices in the curriculum; the presence of critical masses of scholars in selected areas of emphasis. In a very real sense, we do not need to give up these advantages because of our thriving collaborations with Bryn Mawr College, with Swarthmore College, and with the University of Pennsylvania. We have therefore chosen on purpose to remain small to retain the personal; to sustain the close interaction among students; to promote the easy accessibility of faculty; to enable the opportunity to know everyone on campus; to have the ability to realize a human rather than a production-line scale of place.

An intentional community needs constantly to examine and re-examine its vision, mission, goals, and core values. This takes time: precious, invaluable, irretrievable time, away from other pursuits. But without reflection, analysis, adjustments, and reaffirmation of identity, the intentional community becomes an accidental community, defined more by random motion and entropy than by thoughtfulness. This is why the College’s Reaccreditation is so important. For those of you who don’t know, Haverford is now preparing for its required Reaccreditation. This occurs every decade. At its center, the accreditation process involves an 18-month-long self-study. Some of the questions that will guide our self-examination are:
• Does our curriculum reflect our vision of liberal education?
• How are our research and teaching missions interconnected for students and faculty?
• How can we envision and then realize a successfully diverse and multicultural community?
• How do we employ our human, physical, financial, and technological resources to attain our goals?
• What are our priorities for the future and how do we determine them?

Although I personally may not know all the answers to such questions, we as a community do. Together, we will explore the questions, refine them, dissect and reshape them, and create answers to them. Much of what we already do will remain; some will be new; all of it will be truly ours. This is how a community remains an intentional one.

Third, we are a principled community.

Most organizations—including colleges and universities, businesses, governments, and other institutions large and small—will say they have a set of ethical and moral principles. Some will even have a written statement of values or a code of conduct or some other visible manifestation of their value system. At Haverford, we don’t worry so much about writing it down; instead, we act it out.

How is this manifest? First and foremost in the people who choose to come here. Students like Kevin Joseph, faculty like Anne McGuire, and staff like Gail Seldon recognize in Haverford College a place that is simpatico to their particular quest. Do we sometimes fall short of our ideals? Yes. Do we make mistakes? Yes. Are there problems here? Yes. But the people at Haverford are not problem avoiders; I believe we are problem seekers. And when we find a problem needing work, we begin deliberations with an earnest respect for each other. Then we follow through by listening to each other, encouraging each other, caring about each other. This is what a principled community does.

I have also seen in my short time here that this community proceeds with integrity. Even on those matters where there is deep disagreement—and there are such—Haverford folk are characterized by fair-mindedness in appraising each other’s viewpoint and straightforwardness in expressing our own thoughts. We can speak our minds, confident that what we say will be received as an honest and sincere expression of deeply held and carefully considered beliefs, not
as a direct or personal confrontation. We remember the words of the Nigerian proverb: "a big head is a big load."

College presidents are often asked to identify the major challenges facing higher education. I suppose you get used to questions like that. There are many good and reasonable answers (probably at least as many answers as there are college presidents). Some of these are obvious and include: creating a dynamic curriculum; controlling our costs so education can be accessible to all who seek it; harnessing technology to further our purpose; creating a climate of public opinion that celebrates higher learning rather than viewing it with suspicion. The list is endless, and all are important subjects and worthy answers to the question about major challenges.

My own answer is that the most fundamental challenge is to ensure that principled values are intertwined with scholarship. At Haverford we not only teach a course in ethics, we bind ethics into every course we offer. We not only invite visitors to campus who have done deeds of high conscience, we display personal character in our individual daily lives and in our professions. We not only study the uplifting accomplishments of historical and contemporary figures, we strive to act with grace and charity in all our own dealings.

As a scientist given to hypothesis I would offer the following: The time one spends in life doing good is not subtracted from the total time one is allotted on earth. From this conjecture it follows that nothing is lost from leading a principled life and, in fact, much is gained. I ask this community to join me in testing the hypothesis.

Turning to our history for inspiration, it is clear to me that our values are grounded in the Quaker heritage. While the College is not now, and has never been, a religious institution—and we certainly do not believe in indoctrination of any kind—the principles, beliefs, concerns, and testimonies of the Society of Friends still hold us together and contribute to our distinctiveness among many worthy competitors in higher education. When I am out meeting with alumni I consistently find that fealty to Haverford's Quaker ethos is that aspect of the College that is the most lasting outcome of their time here. No one explained it better than Tom Kessinger, the College's eleventh President and my predecessor:

The Haverford College community remains committed to sustaining a special quality of life, a climate of trust, respect, and concern for others, that reflects Friends'
belief in the uniqueness, dignity, and sacredness of each human life. Its continuing Quaker character is manifest today in a number of ways, some more visible than others: the central place of its academic and social honor code, its use of the Quaker decision-making process, the participatory nature of each level of its governance, its community service program, its Peace Studies Program, and in the College Meeting for Worship.

[From The Quaker Heritage of Haverford, 1991]

I hereby publicly confess that I am by nature an optimist, and I know that my assessment of the Haverford College community is a strongly positive one. Luckily, although optimistic, I am not naive, at least not so naive as to be unaware that we face many problems and challenges in the years ahead, and I have alluded to some of these in my remarks. However, the strength of an intellectual, intentional, and principled community is that we can face our obstacles. We can do so because there is another type of community that overlays and sustains these three. I refer to the type of community we have celebrated all week. We are a creative community that calls upon the vast capacity of humans to imagine.

I am not talking about creativity in the sense in which it is usually discussed: as individual accomplishment. I refer instead to what we can spawn together, larger than any of us alone. I am reminded of Bill Rogers, a famous marathoner who was asked once why Kenyans are so much better than Americans as distance runners. His response: "Kenyans train together, Americans by themselves."

It is not the easy path to be a creative community. We are like Kenyan runners and all athletes: constantly raising the bar; expecting more of ourselves on each outing; consistently trying to improve our performance, testing our level of endurance in a quest to reach new levels; improvising on the fly to discover fresh approaches.

This is not completely comfortable. To be creative, you have to not quite fit in, you have to relish unusual patterns, you have to enjoy the irregular rather than the cozy. I know that one of our former Presidents—Jack Coleman, sitting in the audience—embodies this spirit for many Haverfordians.

I would like us now to acknowledge and display the Haverford community of which I speak. Would the members of the Board of

This is our community. We stand here representing Haverford College and all those who could not be present today. I ask us to dream together about what it means to be an intellectual community, an intentional community, a principled community. Then together we shall go forth and celebrate this creative community and our irrepressible human spirit.

THANK YOU!