

## Inaugural Address

**Dr. David George Carter, Sr.**  
**Chancellor**  
**The Connecticut State University System**

*(Remarks prepared for delivery; actual remarks departed slightly from text.)*

Thank you, Dr. Elias and all of the members of the platform party who had such kind words of greeting and comments about the Connecticut State University System and about me. Very special thanks to the members of the Board of Trustees of the Connecticut State University System, chaired by Mr. Lawrence McHugh, for giving me this pinnacle opportunity. I will do my best to measure up to your expectations.

I want to thank President Miller and the Central Connecticut State University family for hosting today's inaugural event. Your warm hospitality is sincerely felt and appreciated. Very special thanks as well to the members of the Inauguration Operations Committee, the Inauguration Advisory Committee, and the members of all the other inauguration support groups under the incredibly competent leadership of Mr. John Mattia who is the consummate special events planner. These exceptional individuals worked diligently to make today's event a success.

The Inauguration has drawn upon the expertise, energy, and talents of scores of people within the Connecticut State University System who have generously donated their time and talents to ensure a memorable event. Please know that I will be forever grateful to all of these volunteers from our four universities - Central, Eastern, Southern, and Western - and from the CSU System Office. Would all of the volunteers who worked on the Inauguration in *any* capacity please stand and be recognized?

Today marks not only the inauguration of a new CSUS chancellor but also marks the inauguration of a series of events leading up to our celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the Connecticut State University System, which was formed in March 1983. The culminating event will take place during the Spring of 2008.

I want to thank all of you for coming here today. But first, a very personal note: Would that my mother and father, cousin Mary Henderson, and the Everett sisters could be physically present here. I believe with every fiber of my being that their spirits of goodness will forever be a part of me.

I owe so much to so many. It would take more time than I have been allotted to name them all. However, I would be remiss were I not to mention a few very special persons who have been mentors and friends over the years.

I gratefully acknowledge the contributions that have been made by my predecessor CSUS chancellors: Drs. James Frost, Dallas Beal, and William Cibes. They are to be commended for their signal stewardship. With the guidance and support of the Board of Trustees, all three of them navigated the four colleges through some very turbulent waters. They worked with governors and members of the General Assembly to ensure that a voice was present to make known the needs of those four colleges that would become universities in 1983. Indeed, and here I immodestly "crib" a phrase from Sir Isaac Newton, I soon will be "standing on the shoulders of the giants."

I am particularly indebted to Mr. Edwin Goldberg and Dr. Jeremiah Lowney and Dr. Elias for their counsel when I expressed an interest in becoming president of Eastern Connecticut State

University but had almost decided to withdraw from the search.

As a result of their encouragement and that of others, I stayed in the search and became the fifth president of Eastern. Though he could not be present today because of his health, a special word of appreciation is due to Mr. Lawrence Davidson, former chair of the Board of Trustees, and to Chairman McHugh and the other Trustees, and Dr. Dallas Beal for supporting me during my tenure as Eastern's president. As a result of their encouragement, I became a part of a community that helped me to continue growing as a person and as an administrator – ultimately arriving at the CSUS as its chancellor.

I also must mention my mentor, friend, and surrogate father, the late Dr. Arthur Johnson and his wife, Dr. Marie Love Johnson. Both of them provided sage counsel during my tenure as president at Eastern, and I value greatly their wisdom and guidance. I will always be in your debt, Marie. A special note of thanks also needs to be made concerning two of our very good friends, both of whom have always been there for us, Dr. Stanley Popiel and his wife, Ingrid Feddersen.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the members of my family who have come to join in today's celebration. When I reflect upon my life, the one constant has always been my family and their unconditional love and support. To quote my oldest daughter Ehrika, "I love you guys!"

And to my wife, Sandra, whom I met at the inauguration of former Chancellor Cibes, little did either of us know that our brief meeting at the last CSUS Inauguration would result in wedding bells. There is a lesson here for any singles in the audience – don't miss inaugurations. If you do, you may just miss the jewel who was waiting there for you!

Since my arrival in Connecticut in 1977, I have had the pleasure of benefiting from the dedication and commitment shown by five chief executives of the State of Connecticut, and our present governor, the Honorable M. Jodi Rell. Likewise, I have benefited from observing the dedication and commitment of our legislators. Thanks to you for what you have done, are doing, and will continue to do to further advance the Connecticut State University System.

In preparing for my remarks today, I debated with myself in terms of the format. Should I follow the traditional practice at such events of articulating a personal vision for the CSUS for the next decade and delineating specific goals and objectives that I believe we should pursue? Or, should I share with you, in a more personal manner, what I believe should be the underlying foundation upon which we collectively and collaboratively will develop to advance the mission of the Connecticut State University System during the next decade. Those of you, who know me, will know that I have chosen to do both!

#### *Our Obligations Today, Tomorrow, and Beyond:*

I am in awe of what I believe to be a rare opportunity for members of the Connecticut State University System in this millennium. We are four, but we are one. Four universities each in pursuit of a different mission while at the same time connected to one another so that we can better assist the state in addressing its needs and thereby have an impact on the nation and society as a whole.

In a recent conversation with my friend James Sandler, I mentioned the transformative nature of what we do in our four universities. How faculty, non-teaching professionals, classified personnel, and administrators all contribute to the transformative effort that brings forth hope for many who did not believe that their world and future could be different. The more we talked, I found myself excited, not about the position of chancellor, although I am, but about the differences those working in the Connecticut State University System have made and must continue to make in the

lives of those we serve as we carry out our respective responsibilities. It is for this reason that I decided on the theme of today's address, "Our Collective Challenge – Content and Character." Re-stated, we must look at our obligations today, tomorrow, and in the future for the CSUS and those we serve.

One's obligation transcends one's vocation and even avocation. As president Kennedy said in Profiles of Courage, "A man does what he must in spite of personal consequences, in spite of obstacles and dangers and pressures and that is the basis of all human morality." This is *our* collective challenge: to transform individuals so that they not only master content but also have character. That is, they understand and accept their obligation not just to self and family but to the common good.

What I am attempting to elucidate was made clear by Arun Gandhi, the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi. Arun Gandhi spent time with his grandfather daily. Picture, if you will, a gifted world leader devoting so much time to a young person, affirming the fundamental human urge to connect to future generations to teach and, yes, perhaps, to learn.

On their final days together, not long before Mahatma Gandhi's death, he gave his young grandson a list of the seven blunders of the world that lead to violence. Here is that list, with the eighth blunder added by grandson Arun Gandhi:

- Wealth without work
- Pleasure without conscience
- Knowledge without character
- Commerce without morality
- Science without humanity
- Worship without sacrifice
- Politics without principle
- Rights without responsibilities

As we carry out *our* responsibilities, we must not let anything deter us from the pursuit of excellence. As chancellor, I will make mistakes, for I am human. However, I believe unless one is willing to risk failing, one will rarely experience success or growth. So I ask you in advance to forgive me for mistakes that I may have made already and those that undoubtedly I will make in the future.

I am asking not just for myself but for all of us as we confront the obstacles that lie in store. We must view these obstacles as challenges and opportunities that await our collective, creative reflection. As human beings, we have the capacity to look beyond the faults of others and grasp their goodness.

Just as we seek to develop our students in terms of their education and character, we also must be willing to assess and develop ourselves in our various respective roles as teaching faculty, administrators, and support staff. We do not have to wait for the federal and state governments to ask us to be accountable. We must take the lead and question ourselves. Actually many of us have been doing just that.

#### *Roles of CSUS personnel:*

I understand the importance of the respective roles of the teaching faculty, non-teaching professionals, and classified personnel in the teaching and learning process. Please know that your work is valued. I am aware that we need more full-time teaching faculty, non-teaching professionals, and classified personnel, and I will work toward that end.

I am concerned and worried about the emotional and psychological well-being of many of our students when they come to us. We must work to make them whole before they graduate and we can if given the necessary resources

*We are four, and we are one.*

It is critical that we collectively draw on the strengths and expertise of one another. During my travels to the four universities, I always come away impressed with the talent and intensity of commitment at all levels. I have found myself asking how we can enhance greater communication across and within disciplines throughout the Connecticut State University System. One such example can be found in our 2006 CSUS Faculty Research Conference which was held at Western Connecticut State University this past weekend. This conference celebrated research across the many divergent disciplines within the four universities of the Connecticut State University System with paper presentations, panel discussions, performances, demonstrations, and exhibits. Such must occur on a regular basis throughout our university system.

The time has come not just for those of us working at one of the universities or at the System Office but for business leaders and elected officials to put aside our differences and to commit ourselves to building a better tomorrow by investing time, energy, and resources into preparing those who will take our places in future years. By working collaboratively we will be preparing individuals to effectively respond to a world that we cannot envision.

I believe that we should be proud that 92% of students attending our state universities are from Connecticut. We should be proud that a significant number of CSUS graduates remain in Connecticut after their graduations. They work, they pay taxes, and they engage in volunteerism contributing to the cultural enrichment of the state. They energize intellectual discourse in a number of businesses and nonprofit agencies. They contribute to the state's economic competitiveness.

I believe that the synergy that is generated when we work toward common goals will enable us to meet and surpass those goals. However, the president, the faculty, non-teaching professionals, classified personnel, chancellor, Board of Trustees, governor, and legislators cannot individually do what needs to be done. We need one another. It is only by working shoulder to shoulder that we can address today's problems and prepare individuals to resolve issues that may not yet be on the horizon. Certainly, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the positive working relationships that we have established with the collective bargaining groups and unions. Their efforts to advance the mission of the Connecticut State University System and to promote that which is best for the citizens of the State of Connecticut is laudable. Please know that you are valued and greatly appreciated.

No one knows the various academic disciplines as well as teaching faculty do. For this reason, I will be asking the senior vice chancellor of academic and student affairs to schedule meetings at which faculty in the same disciplines can come together and discuss curriculum content and course expectations. Just as we are asking and working with elementary and secondary schools on curriculum realignment; we must be willing to ask the questions about our own curricula and learn from one another.

Similar meetings need to take place with those working in the area of student life and student affairs. All this cannot happen in one year, but we must begin.

*A nation in transition:*

As a nation, we have allowed ourselves to become fractionated and now find ourselves yearning

for the moral and ethical compass that once provided direction. We must rise to the occasion, realizing that the approaches we must use in administration, teaching, and instructional support cannot be the same as those used in 1849 when Central Connecticut State University was founded as a normal school.

Evolving circumstances require that we change what we do, but our values and commitment to fairness, justice, and the pursuit of excellence should not change.

*Servant/chancellor:*

Having spoken about some of the roles that need to be carried out if our aspirations and desires for the universities and the system as a whole are to be actualized, it is important that I share my commitment as your servant/chancellor.

It is my vision that the Connecticut State University System will be recognized as an exemplar among its kind, meeting in full the educational needs of the citizens of Connecticut and the nation within a global society. To guarantee attainment of this vision requires collaboration among the four universities to create and sustain student-centered learning environments that promote their distinct missions.

As Chancellor I will give maximum priority to promoting academic and student development programs of the highest quality and lifelong learning opportunities. The office serves, via the four universities, to stimulate the intellectual, economic, and social vitality of Connecticut through the preparation of lifelong learners whose civic responsibility, research, scholarship, and professional practices accrue to the benefit of the state, nation, and the international community.

Through the four universities, the Chancellor's Office will be committed to higher education that is transformative and knowledge based. CSUS will continuously study the economic, social, and demographic needs of the state and use the information gained to provide relevant learning opportunities.

The Chancellor's Office will stand ready to aid the four universities and the Connecticut State University System Office in the implementation of policies established by the Board of Trustees.

I understand and accept the responsibility of my office to advocate on behalf of the Connecticut State University System to all external agencies. I accept also the responsibility to support the budget request of the Connecticut State University System by providing such information and analysis as the General Assembly may require.

We will promote collaboration with other agencies in the private and public sectors, especially with K-12, the Department of Education, and community colleges; evaluate System achievements; and advocate for public higher education to external constituencies.

As Chancellor I will continue to further connections of the Connecticut State University System with business, government and nonprofit organizations, as well as with communities to encourage and enable quality economic development in Connecticut by building on the state's already considerable intellectual capital and by leveraging the assets of the Connecticut State University System through teaching, creative activity, including basic and applied research; public service; and continuing education for lifelong learning.

The Office of the Chancellor and all individuals working in the Connecticut State University System will adhere to the highest ethical and educational standards. Persons working in the Connecticut State University System Office will provide support to, and work collaboratively with, persons assigned to monitor ethical standards employed at the four universities and System

Office.

Governor Rell and members of the General Assembly present today, we want you to know that we are appreciative of the support that you have provided the Connecticut State University System in the past and are confident in your commitment to education and the CSUS. Governor Rell, you can be assured that I will not be asking *merely* for additional funding but, rather, for an investment in perpetuity for the Connecticut State University System - not only to support our efforts but also to help ensure the well-being of our state and our democracy.

We realize that we too must do our part which means that we will focus our energies. Let me count the ways:

1. We will take any and all measures that we can to be more cost effective in the conduct of our work without jeopardizing the quality of our work.
2. We will maximize our use of the various state resources. For example, we will finalize a system-wide articulation agreement that enables a student from any Connecticut community college to move to any of our four universities and not lose even one credit. It is important that we demonstrate to the citizens of Connecticut that we are willing and able to work collaboratively through any perceived differences and arrive at a mutually satisfactory result.
3. We will work to ensure that our students and faculty have a global perspective. The New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman is right. "The World is Flat." It is not enough to talk about various countries and cultures; personal experience is the desideratum! Recognizing that the CSU System cannot afford fiscally or qualitatively to have each constituent university administering, an International Education Center for Study Abroad programs, with approval from the Board of Trustees, we will be asking one university to assume the administrative responsibility for a Center for International Education that will serve as the conduit for the other three universities. Its advisory board would be representatives of the four universities. The initiative would be embarked upon only after a thorough discussion with the university presidents and communities, for in order for any such idea to become a reality, those working on a daily basis with students must be included in the discussion.
4. We will be mindful of the importance of high-quality education at the elementary and secondary levels as well as at the postsecondary level. We are committed to the PK-16 initiative, and I am pleased to report that thanks to the leadership of former President James Roach and the current president of Western Connecticut State University, Dr. James Schmotter, and the faculty and staff at Western, a commitment has been made to work with the Danbury and Bethel Public Schools in our PK-16 initiative. It is my hope that next year we will add another school district. I also am pleased to announce that Dr. James Comer, Maurice Falk Professor of Child Psychiatry at the Yale Child Study Center, will collaborate with us on the PK-16 Initiative. We are also working with Dr. George Coleman, Interim Commissioner of the State Department of Education. Ultimately, our goal is to have each of the four universities establish partnerships with school districts across the state. It has become clear to me that only good can come from such enterprises.
5. We will work to improve our retention and graduation rates.
6. We are committed to providing access and being affordable to all citizens of Connecticut, however, this will depend greatly on the level of state support that is provided.
7. We will utilize and maximize the on-site expertise at the four universities.
8. We must renew our commitment to increasing diversity in the CSUS workforce and the student body.

9. We will let the public know the value that is added as a result of the work being done at the four universities and the System Office. Simply stated, we must be willing to tell our stories to the media, the general public, and to one another. Or put another way, we must "Blow our own horns."

As I conclude, let me state unequivocally that we in the Connecticut State University System have much of which we can be proud. It is important to remember that the lives we touch today have the potential to be tomorrow's leaders who possess the values we all cherish.

Thank you Governor Rell, Chairman McHugh, and other members and former members of the Board of Trustees, members of the General Assembly, other elected officials, CSU System presidents, former presidents, and other higher education officials, faculty, staff, students, and guests for attending today's inauguration. I am deeply appreciative of your presence and ongoing support. I accept the trust that you have placed in me and I commit myself to advancing the mission of the Connecticut State University System as your Chancellor.

If you would permit me to paraphrase the words of one of my favorite poems by Robert Frost, *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*: we do not have time to sleep, for we have promises to keep and miles to go before we sleep. Thank you and may all that is good surround and protect you.