



Connecticut College 92nd Convocation

August 2006

President's Remarks

Leo I. Higdon, Jr.

Good afternoon.

As Professor Devlin just noted, the word convocation derives from Latin and means, literally, "to call together." With this ceremony, we call together the College community, a community created for the purpose of cultivating educated and engaged individuals committed to the betterment of society.

The College's first president, Frederick Sykes, articulated the vision of uniting ideals of culture and character with academic study, social direction and human sympathy. It is a vision I embrace as the 10th president of the College. It describes a tradition that endures and grows as Connecticut College develops leaders who embrace personal ethics and responsibility as a part of their global view.

I am deeply committed to liberal education as the best foundation for nurturing the kind of leaders our complex society needs. At Connecticut College, you are developing your capacity to ask questions, evaluate data, synthesize information and make reasoned judgments. These skills rely on an ability to listen critically and openly to others.

But leadership requires more than intellectual skills. President Sykes' ideals of culture and character are equally important for real leadership. Today, as new students enter this community, you join the whole student body in committing to an honor code. I see the code as a critical part of your education here. At Connecticut College you are a member of a community based on trust and mutual respect. As others invest their trust in you, you take seriously the responsibility of honesty and ethical conduct.

Your education will give you the tools to be personally and professionally successful. With the privilege of this education comes the duty to act when your sense of integrity obliges you. The service you perform for others, as a student and later in life, is an expression of your honor and the education you received at Connecticut College.

Today, we gather — faculty, staff and students — as members of this unique community organized around the pursuit of knowledge and a sense of honor. I hope the knowledge you gain will inspire your sense of social responsibility and the human sympathy that President Sykes envisioned almost 100 years ago. And I hope you are motivated to lead in an ethical way that reflects your character.

I am honored to join you as a new member of this exceptional community and look forward to working with you in the new academic year.