

Speeches

*Remarks at the Inauguration of
President Cecil O. Samuelson*

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On behalf of all I wish to state our deep appreciation for the service of President Merrill J. Bateman, who presided here from January 1996 until April 2003. His was a wonderful and very progressive administration. We offer him the highest commendation for the tremendous work he accomplished and to his beloved companion, Marilyn, who stood so ably at his side.

He was honorably released because we felt he had carried long enough the great stress of administering this institution while at the same time serving as a General Authority of the Church.

He never offered a word of complaint. Under the most difficult of circumstances he met his responsibility in both fields in a most admirable and wonderful way. Thank you, Elder Bateman, for work superbly well done. You and Marilyn may always carry with you the satisfaction that comes of great service gladly and honorably given.

When there is a change in the monarchy of Great Britain, the people say, “The king is dead. Long live the king.”

When there is a change in the administration of this university, we say, “The president is released with honors. Happiness and great achievement to his successor.”

President Samuelson, we have conferred upon you the authority of your high office. We have heard your inspirational response and sense your commitment to move the university forward on its destined course as one of the great institutions of the nation. Here we are doing what is not done in any other major university of which I am aware. We are demonstrating that faith in the Almighty can accompany and enrich scholarship in the secular. It is more than an experiment. It is an accomplishment.

We must continue to strengthen our scholarship in every discipline that is followed here. But with that we must never let down on our determination to teach faith in the Living God; to build testimony of His Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; to teach the validity of the Holy Bible and of its companion scripture, the Book of Mormon; and to build conviction concerning the restoration of the gospel in this, the dispensation of the fullness of times. Here character building becomes an even greater concern than imparting knowledge of secular subjects, although we shall never neglect this knowledge.

President Samuelson, we have known you for a good while. We have admired your professional skills. We are familiar with the depths of your spirituality. To you we say, go forward in your great role of leadership on this campus. As the president leads, so goes the

institution. May those associated with you in the administration march to the same drum in moving toward a greater future than this school has ever known.

We have here a marvelous physical plant. It has been made possible by the consecrations of our people throughout the world. What a satisfying thing it is to walk about these grounds and never see a beer can or a cigarette butt or anything of the kind.

To the staff who work with you in creating and maintaining this beautiful environment we extend our congratulations and a charge to keep them beautiful, clean, and conducive to habits of order in the lives of those who use these facilities.

To the faculty we express gratitude for your dedication in sharing with a large body of anxious and eager students the vast volume of learning that you have accumulated and to which you have added with distinction. There is a spirit of fellowship on this campus between teacher and student that is wonderful and in many respects unique. I am reminded of the occasion recorded in the book of Acts when Peter and John went into the temple at the hour of prayer. A cripple was brought daily to the gate of the temple, where he asked for alms from those going into the temple.

And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. [Acts 3:4–7]

Yours is the great opportunity and the very precious responsibility, in effect, of reaching down to lift up those who come to learn and prepare for a productive and meaningful life. Most have been sent here by hopeful parents, who pray night and morning for their success. Great sacrifice has been made to enable them to come. They long for success. And it is your opportunity and your responsibility to see that they do not fail.

We should not have failures on this campus. We are more than teachers. We are shepherds. And we know that the spirit of shepherding resides in the hearts of those who serve here as members of the great Brigham Young University faculty.

And now to you students, you for whom this institution was designed: there would be no university without you. You have come here with great hopes and high expectations. I need not remind you that you are a very select group. You have been carefully chosen. We want you to know that all who serve you here desire that you will be successful, that you will have a wonderful experience, that you will be immensely happy and very proud of the institution of which you are a part.

The motto of this university is “The Glory of God Is Intelligence.” You have come to partake of that intelligence, that light and truth which becomes the vast lexicon of your learning. What a precious and magnificent opportunity is afforded you. Robert Browning said that “a man’s reach should exceed his grasp” (“Andrea del Sarto” [1855], line 97). Extend your grasp while reaching ever higher to drink from the inexhaustible fountain of learning that is offered you.

The things you learn on this campus will become a part of your eternal treasure, for the Lord has said, “Whatever principle of intelligence 2 Brigham Young University 2003–

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Such teachings as this are the very essence of what you are offered and can gather into your hearts and minds in this unique and wonderful institution.

We have all smiled a little at the recent report of the Princeton Review. Their rankings come of a survey of 106,000 students representing 351 colleges and universities. The survey indicates that for the fifth year in a row this is the nation’s number-one “stone cold sober” university. You are regarded as the most religious student body in America. You are number two in the quality of life found on the campus.

You are rated “third for the best college library, sandwiched between such notable institutions as Harvard and Dartmouth” (“A Stone Cold Sober Report,” *Deseret News*, 24 August 2003, AA01; see also Tad Walch, “Y. Grins over ‘Sober’ Label,” *Deseret News*, 19 August 2003, A01).

I would venture to say, President Samuelson, that there are many university and college presidents in the nation who would be glad to preside over an institution where they did not have to deal with the terrible problems of binge drinking and the train of evils that follow this.

My dear young friends, how blessed you are to live in this good land. How blessed you are to be on this beautiful campus—how blessed to live in this great age in the history of the earth. Everyone here this morning enjoyed good food for breakfast. Everyone slept in a secure place last night. Everyone had good water at the touch of a faucet. Those of us who traveled here did so on good highways in air-conditioned cars.

What a blessed land. What a blessed season in the history of mankind.

There is a sign on the gate of this campus that reads: “Enter to learn; go forth to serve.”

I invite you, every one of you, to make that your motto. Mediocrity will never do. You are capable of something better. Give it your very best. You will never again have such an opportunity. Pray about it. Work at it. Make it happen. Drink in the great knowledge here to be obtained from this dedicated faculty. Qualify yourselves for the work of the world that lies ahead. It will largely compensate you in terms of what it thinks you are worth. Walk the high road of charity, respect, and love for others and particularly those who are less fortunate. Be happy. Look for the sunlight in life. Reach for the stars.

Build friendships. You have the greatest opportunity of your lives to establish wonderful associations with people of your own kind who think as you do. And hopefully for each of you there will come romance, a partner true and beautiful with whom you can share a life that will go on into the eternities.

Concerning your marriage and your future endeavors, may I repeat with great earnestness and with all of the power of persuasion of which I am capable these words spoken repeatedly by President David O. McKay: “No success in life can compensate for failure in the home” (quoting James Edward McCulloch, ed., *Home: The Savior of Civilization* [Washington, D.C.: Southern Co-operative League, 1924], 42).

Your future family relationships will be the greatest treasure of your life. No salary you will ever earn, no fees you will ever be paid will compensate for failure to live as you ought to live as a family.

Look to the example of your president. He and his beloved companion, Sharon, have walked side by side with love in their hearts through all the years of their association. Make them your shining example.

To the many visitors we have here today, I wish to thank you for coming. You do great honor to President Samuelson. You do honor to this institution. And we hope that it has been a good and rewarding experience for each of you.

God bless you, my beloved friends and associates, every one of you, to whom I feel to reach out in a spirit of true affection, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.