

Edward Arthur Trabant

22nd President

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE NEWS

SUMMER 1969

THE INAUGURATION
OF
EDWARD ARTHUR TRABANT
AS THE
TWENTY-SECOND PRESIDENT
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

TEN-THIRTY O'CLOCK
SATURDAY
THE SEVENTEENTH OF MAY
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND
SIXTY-NINE
MITCHELL HALL AUDITORIUM
NEWARK, DELAWARE

IT would be inaccurate to report that the inauguration of Dr. Edward Arthur Trabant as President of the University of Delaware was the largest academic event ever held on the campus. Commencement and even Honors Day attract larger crowds. But for warmth, dignity without ostentation and impressive efficiency, the inauguration of the 22nd President was everything that could have been desired.

That this was the case was no accident. Dr. Trabant himself had requested that the inauguration be a "family affair" with primary focus on a serious discussion of the future of the University involving students, faculty, staff, trustees and members of the Newark community. A 14-member committee, representing all of these groups, worked diligently to see that his wishes were carried out. Thus, a day-long symposium on the University Community Design, featuring more than two dozen discussion topics, was the initial part of the two-day program. Two excellent guest speakers, Dr. Sidney Hook, New York University philosopher, and Dr. Kenneth S. Lynn, professor of English at Federal City College, Washington, D.C., gave keynote addresses, Professor Hook discussing "Academic Freedom and Academic Anarchy" and Dr. Lynn recounting his experiences at America's newest land-grant university, an urban institution with a largely Negro enrollment and a highly experimental philosophy of education.

So that students and faculty might avail themselves of the opportunity to participate in the discussion of important questions central to the future of the University, classes were dismissed on both days. Although attendance was reasonably good, it was obvious that many students regarded the inauguration period as a pre-exam holiday and simply headed for a long weekend at the beach. Considering the incessant hue and cry about student participation in decision making, far greater numbers of students might have been expected to participate in sessions such as "Trustees and Higher Education,"



In the foreground, l. to r., as the delegates assembled for the inaugural procession were President E. A. Trabant, Student Government Association President Delma E. Lafferty, Board of Trustees President James M. Tunnell and Vice President for Academic Affairs John W. Shirley.

“Drugs,” “Are Our Classrooms Relevant to Life?” “Afro-American Studies,” “Dissent on the Campus” and “The Relevance of ROTC.”

Other parts of the busy weekend program included the presentation of *Abraham*, an experimental theatrical production based on the Biblical story of Abraham and Isaac, by the E 52 University Theatre; a post-inauguration luncheon for participants in the Student Center; and an inaugural concert by the University of Delaware Resident String Quartet.

Results of the symposium, planned and organized under the direction of Professor Charles H. Bohner, were carefully preserved by student recorders and will be published later this year after final editing and writing have been completed. Plans for two similar symposia in 1969-70 already are being formulated by Professor Frank B. Dilley, who has been appointed by the President to head this important undertaking.

Favored by warm spring weather, the inauguration itself was a model academic ceremony. Provost John W. Shirley presided, delegates from the student body, faculty, Alumni Association, other universities and colleges and the professional staff comfortably filled Mitchell Hall, and greetings were extended to the incoming president by representatives of many organizations and groups. G. Burton Pearson Jr., a member of the Presidential Selection Committee, represented the Board of Trustees; Dr. Edward H. Rosenberry, chairman of the Faculty Presidential Selection Committee, spoke for the faculty; and Miss Delma E. Lafferty, 1968-69 Student Government Association President, ably represented the undergraduates. Gary E. O'Connor, president of the Graduate Student Association, was the spokesman for a growing number of graduate students; Dr. John W. Alden, newly elected president, represented the Alumni Association; and Dr. Luna I. Mishoe, president of Delaware State College, spoke in behalf of American institutions of higher learning. Mayor Norma B. Handloff and Gov-

ernor Russell W. Peterson, represented the city and state, respectively.

Terri Lynn Cornwell '69 and Beth O. Tonnessen '69 contributed the musical portions of the program through the organ prelude, recessional and interlude and James M. Tunnell Jr., president of the Board of Trustees, welcomed the guests and performed the investiture of the President. The Rev. Paul E. McCoy, senior minister at Grace Methodist Church, Wilmington, gave the invocation and the Rev. Marvin H. Hummel, Episcopal Chaplain at the University, pronounced the benediction.

It would be difficult to assemble on one platform in the State of Delaware a more talented group of speakers than those who brought greetings and good wishes to the incoming president. There were flowery phrases and clever metaphors and moments of humor, but throughout there was an aura of sincerity and good will. President Trabant's acceptance of these tributes was gracious and his formal response, timely and perceptive, follows:

TO inaugurate is “to observe formally the beginning.” Since the beginning often means the framing of questions and defining problems and opportunities, it is in this frame I would begin my remarks this morning. Further, since to inaugurate is “to bring about the beginning” and is “the first of a projected series,” I shall also address some of my thoughts towards orientation and illumination of the problems mentioned and will present suggestions for possible resolutions.

Question #1: What are the root causes of the frustrations and resentments that have erupted with cataclysmic force at so many American universities in recent years?

In words of Ernest van den Haag, “It is a seeming paradox that, in part, our industrial civilization is to blame even though it is a necessary condition for



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Professor Kenneth S. Lynn, one of two featured Symposium speakers, told of the internal strife jeopardizing the future of Federal City College, the newest Land-Grant university, in Washington, D.C.

the production of the abundance of freedom and the equality the mass of men crave." It is clear to all of us that frustration and resentment, far from disappearing with affluence and equality, have escalated—particularly for and with the young. The vocalized alleged causes of unhappiness are often irrelevant and imaginary, but unhappiness persists among us and is real enough. What I sense in this unhappiness is a lack of courage to admit that the sources of the unhappiness are, in part, inherent in the human predicament. In simple terms, this may be stated as follows: A major factor underlying all disruptions in our lives today is a childish effort to postpone growing up — a frantic effort to delay the acceptance of adult responsibility.

As evidence of this thesis, one needs only to recall recent events involving senseless and sometimes vicious destruction of property, the frequent use of puerile obscenities, feigned unkemptness, and an inappropriate affectation of purity and innocence.

Another possible example can be found among minorities at our universities and throughout our country in general. It has been said by Bayard Rustin, "Negro students are suffering from the shock of integration and are searching for an easy way out of their problems with demands for separate facilities and programs."

If this thesis is true, namely, that a major cause of the irrational action in society is a result of a failure to recognize our fundamental human predicament, then what is the role of the University in this era and area?

It is true that universities cannot solve all problems inherent in the human predicament, nor can universities enable students to miraculously transcend the conditions of their life and their own natures. But universities can help students to become acquainted with the long and painful experience of mankind in creating, solving, and recreating its problems, thereby enabling them to participate in that bittersweet, but nonetheless glorious, satisfaction of responsible adult living.

YET, even if these thoughts are accepted, one must recognize that there are those who say that universities are too decadent to perform this service of enlightenment on human progress and regress. For example, in the words of Russell Burke, "Unloved by students, by members of the faculty, by legislators, by its neighbors, by its alumni, the American university is decadent. Therefore, it cannot obtain loyalty sufficient even to maintain tolerable order upon its own campus or to conduct ordinary classes. Its feeling of community dissolved, today the university is virtually at the mercy of the instructor ideologue and the student demagogue. Absorption into today's life and public service has won for the university simple, general contempt and the violation of its old immunities."

I reject this as a portrait of or blueprint of our University of Delaware. Only when a university's present policies are inconsistent with the original purpose of the institution and only when the faculty and students are hostile or indifferent to the real objects of higher learning, does academic decadence overwhelm old foundations.

So I ask the question, what was the original purpose of this institution, of our University of Delaware? I submit that our University was created for the cultivation of intellect, of your intellect and mine. It began with the premise that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom and that there exists a Truth beyond fear which may be pursued through certain intellectual disciplines. This University was founded for the purpose of developing right reason and to furnish what Burke called "the wardrobe of a moral imagination."

In calling for the new University of Delaware Community Design at the Convocation last Fall, I asked that it be done with full recognition and appreciation of our University's heritage and accomplishments to date. The foregoing is what I had in mind in that reference to the past.

But what of the future? Is our University of Delaware to be just an arranger of contracts with Washington, or a supplier of graduate student labor for research projects and undergraduate quiz sections, or

the bestower of a trifle of culture and conviviality on students. The answer is no.

At the University of Delaware we are developing new values in the teaching-learning situation. We are developing appropriate levels and proper areas of responsibility and governance. We are developing a campus life which is an integral, dynamic part of an educational program. We are redefining and restructuring our curricula. We are finding answers to the questions, more collegial autonomy or less? Graduate education, is it worth it? Should areas of student governance be extended? Are our classrooms relevant to life? Is university public service problem solving or education?

And what is more important is that all of this is being done and all the questions are being answered based upon the founding assumption that there exists a Truth beyond fear which may be pursued through intellectual discipline.

NOW a final question. What is the role of the new President of the University of Delaware in all of this? In answering this question, I read a letter received shortly after the announcement of my appointment. "Dear Dr. Trabant: Now is the time to bring a new era to the University of Delaware.

As Delaware's next President, you will have a difficult road to walk. Your position will, of necessity, become more closely aligned with that of a manager instead of an educator. Gone are the days when all a college president had to do was decide what a school would teach and make sure that the faculty and students did their respective jobs. As President you must be able to manage and work with many

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Dr. Trabant gets an assist in arranging his academic regalia from Governor Russell W. Peterson. Governor Peterson brought greetings from the state and pledged his support to the new president in the development of "a great university."

groups, with the Board of Trustees, the State Legislature, the Governor, the faculty, the students who are pressing for more voice in university affairs. Equally important, you must also maintain public opinion about our school.

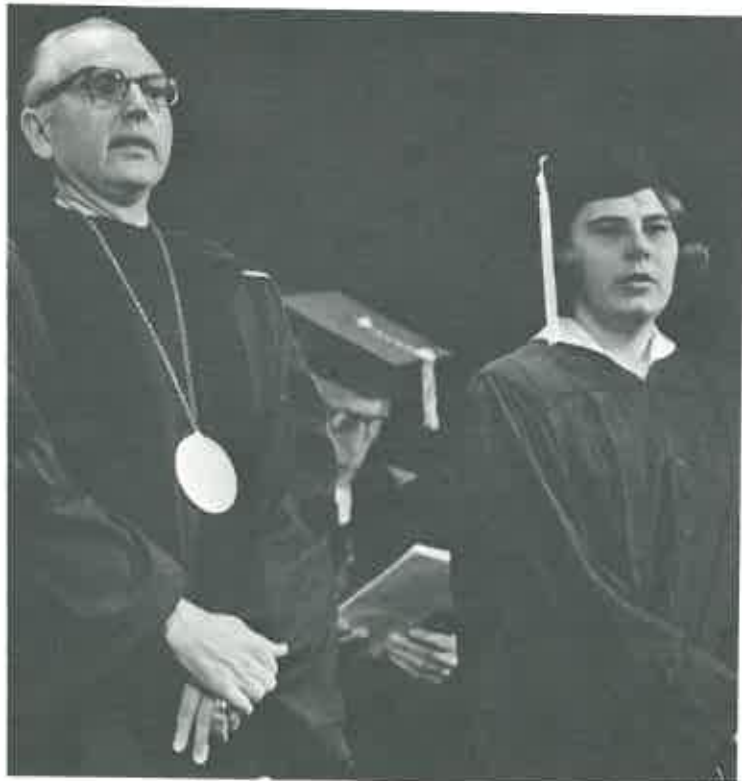
As Delaware's next President, you cannot be just an educator. You cannot just be faculty-oriented or research-oriented or just student-oriented. You must divide your energies and devotion to all causes with equal fervor, you must allow more student and faculty representation in the running of the University. You must stand for the autonomy of the University against pressure from the outside.

You must furthermore display that independence and integrity to stand up for what you believe.

Colleges around the country are time bombs; the fuses are lit. At Delaware we don't need a demolition expert to dismantle the bombs. What we need is someone who, because of his fairness and his willingness to make the University a better place by allowing all parties to contribute, will keep the bombs from being made in the first place. These are the responsibilities, Dr. Trabant, which fall upon your shoulders as the 22nd President of the University of Delaware."

Ladies and gentlemen, I accept these tenets and responsibilities.

President Trabant and Miss Lafferty join the audience and platform group in singing the University of Delaware alma mater during the inauguration ceremonies.



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