

# **An inauguration is more than an installation: It's a beginning**

By Tisa Mason

When, on Friday, I am installed as the 10th president of Fort Hays State University, it will be a day of reflection, inspiration and celebration.

It will also be a day of great joy and gratitude, because in many ways, FHSU and I took similar paths – out of humble beginnings, but with much promise, came a journey that has always been nurtured by the love and support of a family and community.

We have excelled, and we have stumbled. We have grown. We strive daily to achieve excellence and to become something or someone more magnificent than our modest beginnings, with success measured only by the positive impact we have had on the lives of others. We know that our successes are achieved through the collective efforts of many.

An inauguration ceremony serves as formal means of uniting people who care deeply about the future of a university. The theme, “Unlocking Untapped Potential to Empower the World to Greater Success,” sets the perfect tone for expressing the work ahead of us. It captures the impact on our students and alumni and the breadth of our reach, stretching out over the nation, crossing oceans and languages, transforming lives in our own backyard and around the world. I am so excited to celebrate and lead this magnificent university as we step boldly into an even brighter future. That future will be created through the power of the connections forged between staff and alumni, faculty and students, university and community, and it will be guided by our spirit through the hard work of bringing dreams to life.

The ceremony has been meticulously planned by an outstanding committee: Karen Allen, Hayley Bieker, Gordon Carlson, Cindy Cline, Melissa Dixon, Terry Crull, Anthony Gabel, Tre' Giles, Mary Hammond, Elodie Jones, Craig Karlin, Lisa Karlin, Lisa Lang, Rhonda Meyerhoff, Karl Pratt, Adam Schibi, Jacob Ternes and Nancy Vogel, chaired by Janette Meis.

I owe them and many others an enormous debt of gratitude. So many very thoughtful elements were built into the occasion: Student honor societies will be part of the processional; people from the university and the wider community will deliver video greetings; our TGOF partners will offer discounts in local businesses; Kim Stewart, chair of the Department of Applied Technology, built a special stand to hold the presidential medallion; the Fort Hays Singers and the FHSU Wind Ensemble will bring their glorious music.

And the Celebration on the Quad will be the perfect opportunity for everyone to gather in the name of Fort Hays State University and share their love for Tiger Nation. This is a place of heart and home.

Finally, because I start each day reading a devotional, I am grateful for my church family, Celebration Community Church, and especially Pastor Brant Rice, for hosting a morning worship service specifically for the inauguration, ensuring I begin my day grounded in and supported by my faith.

I am truly touched by the generosity of thought and effort that have gone into this event, and I hope all community members will feel welcome to come. The ceremony is open to the public, and I hope everyone who can't come to Gross Memorial Coliseum will join us through the live-stream.

Because for me, inauguration day is a magnificent opportunity to share my beloved Fort Hays State with members of my family as well as cherished friends and colleagues who will travel to participate in the celebration. It is a day when we invite people to our metaphorical home and our

community, a caring community that consistently demonstrates a genuine appreciation and love for this university.

It is, of course, a deeply personal day as well. It is the day when I will formally accept the office of president and thank those whose leadership has presented me with a vibrant, student-focused university. It is the day when I will publicly declare my commitment to relentlessly pursue the promise of our future together.