

Living the Dream:
Making Learning Come to Life in Pursuit of
Excellence!

The
Convocation and Investiture
Of
Dr. Ervin V. Griffin, Sr.
As the
Fourth President of
Halifax Community College

12:00 Noon
The Centre – Halifax Community College
Weldon, North Carolina
Friday, October Nineteenth
Two Thousand Seven

Living the Dream: Making Learning Come to Life in Pursuit of Excellence!

Let me begin by thanking God for providing the opportunity and instilling the drive in me to be of service to all of the wonderful people here and those that have given me that same opportunity in the past. I believe that he has guided my steps to this place (Halifax/Northampton Counties) to be President of Halifax Community College for a time such as this. It really is comforting knowing that you are in the right place at the right time to help “fulfill the vision for Halifax Community College”. You know without a “vision the people will perish”. That’s all the preaching I might do but I had to establish my credentials of who really brought me to this place.

I realize that this is a very historic occasions for many reasons and appreciate the significance of the opportunity and challenges that lay before us in fulfilling the mission of HCC. As I said at our recent founders day program – I owe a great deal to the Presidents of HCC who provide the nucleus and nurtured the vision for the college we seen today.

I thank you all of former Presidents for the work that you have done in the past to set us on the path of making Learning Come to Life in Pursuit of Excellence. I will try my very best to ensure that our pursuit of excellence in all of our activities will not be a slogan but carried out in all of our endeavor for our students, faculty, staff, administration, business and industry partners, and community at large.

I want to thank our SGA President Mann of our SGA, Professor Watson, Vice-President Armstrong, Chairman McElheny, and others members of the HCC family for their support.

HCC was among 38 colleges that achieved a "superior" rating from the state system and also met 11 of 12 Critical Success Factors measures. HCC scored highest, 100 percent, in the categories of employer satisfaction with graduates, client satisfaction with customized training, goal completion, and employment status of graduates. All of HCC’s 2004-05 graduates were employed within one year of graduating. The faculty, staff, students, and administration – I

applaud all of you for your past successes and the legacy we will build in the future. Together, we can do everything is possible for our college and community!

All of the former Presidents, please know will endeavor to follow in your great works and keep HCC a Superior Performing institution of higher education for many years to come.

To the Board of Trustees and the search committee, Thanks you for your support and dedication to our college. I also want to thank you for having the vision and encourage to name a young man from the hills of West Virginia your 4th President. I will never forget the statement of the characteristics and attributes at Halifax Community College. DR. Edwards – The trustees wanted me to do everything but walk on water!

Nonetheless, I realized in my heart that this was a place that had great possibilities and during my visits with many of you it was confirmed then as it is now. Thank you HCC family – Our students, faculty, staff, foundation, and my administrative staff for your untiring support of making our vision a reality.

One of the attributes I remember in the description was the ability to work with our legislative and political bodies. It has been a very pleasant task to work with our Commissioners in Halifax and Northampton Counties. I pledge to continue working to maintain your support for the citizens of this region.

On Tuesday our dream team of representatives from the North Carolina Legislature – Senator Jones, Representative Angela Bryant, Representative Michael Wray, and Representative Lucy T. Allen – met with our colleges legislative and community affairs committee to give an update on the recent legislative session. We appreciate that support and your coming to our college and spending time with us. You listened to our praises and challenges and promised to help where you can in the future. We appreciate that very much!

Congressman Butterfield's comments are greatly appreciated and his support for our college has been unfailing. Congressman Butterfield and I met and he asked me if I knew a Delcenia Spurlock, who was a friend of his. Of course I did because we served on the OIC of Charleston Board of Directors

together. If he knew somebody from WV, I knew we would have a great relationship. Thanks Congressman Butterfield.

Our communities represented by Mayor Draper and Beale have been very supportive of our efforts also. My first opportunity to meet with the residents was the Christmas Parade last year. We did fine until we ran out of candy near the end of the parade. But the people were and still are warm and genuine. That felt good

My first introduction to the North Carolina State Board for Community Colleges was at Isothermal Community Colleges. Chairperson Pinnix-Ragland and Vice-Chair Powell and the rest of the Board smiled when they began the confirmation process. And then I began to smile and think well I think they are going to confirm me today.

President Skinner thanks for the support coming from my colleagues in the North Carolina Association of Community College Presidents. I won't tell you all of the things they told me President Lancaster but most of it was very good. I have had the opportunity to call on many of them for advice and it has been given freely and with confidence. I want to give special thanks for my colleges in our nursing consortium (Wilson, Edgecombe, and Nash Community College President) for their help in introducing me to the system).

Dr. Donnie Hunter of the Director of the Community College Trustees was one of my first contacts concerning the position at HCC. He assured me that it was a good college with great opportunities for the right person. And he essentially told me that "he didn't know whom the Board of Trustees would finally pick to be the new President but if he didn't think that I had the qualifications needed to do the job he wouldn't be sending me the email". We'll those of you who know me well, know that I couldn't let that past. Thank you Dr. Hunter for that email and the rest is history.

Allen Purser, President/CEO of the Roanoke Valley Chamber and Dr. Bracy, Superintendent of Weldon City Schools, are two of my best friends and partners of HCC. The college has many partnerships with the Roanoke Valley Chamber as well as with our Educational partners in Weldon, Halifax County,

Northampton County, and Roanoke Rapids. I thank all of you for the spirit of partnership, which is vital to our fulfilling the vision for educational and economic success in our region. Educational vitality in all of our system is without a doubt economic development at its best.

Dr. McCollum and Rev. Owens I want to thank you for your comments and support from the Faith Community. I always want the preachers praying for our college and me more than anyone else. Reverend Owens, my mother was a United Methodist and Dr. McCollum my father was a Baptist. We attended Methodist Sunday school on week and the next week was Baptist in the same church. So I know God from all angles.

Dr. McCollum is President of Eastern Carolina Christian College and HCC recently signed an agreement with the college to provide the entire general education curriculum for students enrolled at ECCC. He came to us with the partnership and our Board of trustees eagerly approved the agreement.

Our Board of Trustees, who recommended me for the position, is a group of very dedicated and loyal citizens who care deeply about our college. I appreciate your expression of support and with your guidance and help we will make the mission and vision of HCC a reality. You have set a tone and style that has brought us to this place today and will lead us to even higher heights in the future. I appreciate you and I am blessed to work for all of you!

I suppose everyone is asking by now are you going to say anything about my family and friends here today. Well maybe.

I really appreciate my family both extended and my adopted family who have traveled here to be with me today. I suppose anyone who would look at my favorite picture of me and my sister Lois (a retired executive from Pfizer) would not think someday I would have the opportunity to serve as President of a great college like this. They have been my support system and cheerleaders from near and far. I see many people in the audience who have worked with me and enabled me to be standing here before you today.

President Lancaster, I have said all of this because I want our students and others in attendance today to know one thing. **No one in life can be**

successful with the help and support of other people. There are few “Lone Rangers” who have good success in life. And that is success that is lasting and it is something that your successor can build upon for the next generation.

I suppose I am expected to give you some words of wisdom or new vision for the new millennium. However, if you have read my column for the last 7 months or so, paid any attention to my speeches, or my work with you – you all ready know that I want HCC to be the place where **“Learning Comes to Life in Pursuit of Excellence in word and deed.** Regardless of what our students want to learn or be involved in it must be done with the spirit of excellence. I don't really believe in slogans.

At the time of my appointment as the 4th President of HCC, I stated “I know we are all after the same thing, improving the lives of our students, improving our community, our state, our nation, and our world. Let us work together to achieve these thing from this day forward”. That goal and vision has not changed. I do believe that we have made a great start on keeping that promise.

We will continue to meet the unparallel task of e nriching the curriculum, workforce development, occupational education, and lifelong learning in the future. Shared values guide the HCC in fulfilling its mission. These values influence our actions, guide our decisions, mold policies, and determine strategic planning and action. HCC demonstrates these values through a commitment to:

- **Opportunity**
 - Serving a diverse student population through lifelong learning and student development services that are inclusive, accessible, affordable and of the highest q uality.
- **Teaching and Learning**
 - Maintaining teaching excellence and setting high standards that promote and encourage relevant instruction that places the learner's needs first and use of a variety of delivery systems to produce lifelong learners. Providing opportunities in out of class activities that will give our students the opportunity to put theory into practice.

- **Effective Learning Environments**
 - Maintain innovative learning environments that encourage creativity and the acquisition of knowledge and skills that prepare students for changing work environments, responsible citizenship, and leading rewarding lives.
- **Appropriate Use of Technology**
 - Using technology effectively to enhance instruction and learning and to expand access to educational opportunities through distance education
- **Professional Development**
 - Encouraging excellence and renewal in faculty and staff performance by providing ongoing opportunities for professional growth and renewal.
- **Accountability**
 - Demonstrate good stewardship by making effective and efficient use of all resources thereby ensuring accountability to the state of North Carolina and service region we serve.

I am living my dream as a Community College President that was in my heart from a very young and precocious individual. Yes, we have some challenges ahead but we also have some great opportunities. As Frank Clark so aptly states” **If you can find a path with no obstacles, it probably doesn’t lead anywhere**”.

I attended a workshop at our church Monday night on leadership and found this gem about what is a true leader. Mile Monroe, a very famous writer and teachers, says that: “ Leadership is the capacity to influence others through inspiration motivated by a passion, generated by a vision, produced by conviction and ignited by a purpose”.

I will assure all of you assembled here that I will “continue to provide leadership that will be inspiring, passionate, focused on our vision and mission, with a strong and active belief that our purpose and goals during my tenure here will be to make HCC A PLACE WHERE **LEARNING COMES TO**

LIFE IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE A REALITY FOR ALL OF YOU IN WORD
AND DEED!

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING AND MAY GOD CONTINUE TO
BLESS ALL OF YOU!

Dr. Ervin V. Griffin, Sr. – President/CEO
Investiture Response – October 19, 2007