

LUMBEE TRIBE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
INAUGURAL ADDRESS

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JANUARY 7, 2016

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THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT PEMBROKE  
GIVENS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER  
PEMBROKE, NORTH CAROLINA

CHAIRMAN HARVEY GODWIN, JR.

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*The following Inaugural Address was given by Harvey Godwin, Jr.  
on Thursday, January 7, 2016, at 6:00 p.m. before tribal  
council members and the public.*

Thank you, thank you very much. As others have stated, I only stand here because of the grace of God and my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I would like to thank past council members and Chair Paul Brooks for their service to the Lumbee people. I would also like to thank Chancellor Robin Cummings for allowing us to have GPAC tonight and the Annex afterwards.

This university means so much to me and my family. My wife graduated from here, my sister. My mother graduated here in the 40s. She is 90 years old. My son graduated from here, and the other son spent two years here but went to that other school that has that blue-color sky.

But this university means so much to our people, and it's with our faith in God and our education that our forefathers fought for and provided to us many generations ago, stands as a beacon of what we should be doing now, and tonight, I pledge my allegiance, personally, and as the leader of the Lumbee Tribe, with the tribal council, that we will partner with the University going forward, and we will partner for the goodness of the people, the Lumbee people, but we will partner for the goodness of all people that come to this great university.

Tonight, I submit for a call to action. Let's all get ready to lead. You're here tonight because you care about your people. You're here that you care about people that are on the stage. You're here that you care about your families. We all have to do this together. And a call to action -- we have to consider the old path. This university represents some of the old path, but our belief in God is evident that we're a spiritual people. Our forefathers,-- that's how they brought us out of the swamps. That's why we are where we are now.

The value of an education, of course, protecting our Lumbee culture, hard work, and integrity and honesty in everything we do, and of course, our connection to the land. We must respect and honor -- just a few years ago, the crafters of our constitution. We must embrace the spirit of the constitution and tighten loopholes and strengthen the rights further of the Lumbee people. The old path, now the new path -- and straight up front, I want to tell you that we will have a transparent and open government.

The questions stands: Does our government work? Is it -- it is extremely vital -- it's

entirely vital that there is a trust between the Lumbee people and their government. The government must do their business in the light of day, not in darkness; must build integrity by managing public dollars; spending dollars wisely; and holding to account all dollars spent. We must see bad habits and stop them. We must be held accountable to tell the truth to the people at all times. All levels of government, state and federal, have ways for the people to request public information such as the North Carolina Public Records Act and the Freedom of Information Act for the federal government.

The Lumbee Constitution, as it's currently written, doesn't fully protect the rights of the Lumbee people, and it doesn't promote a transparent government. I promise you we will have a constitutional convention to institute a system for the people to request public records from the tribal government. This will take a collaboration between the Chair and the administration and the tribal council, and this will take time and patience on behalf of all, but we must make informed decisions.

We will have outreach. The tribal employees

will be charged to go to all the Indian centers throughout Lumbee land throughout Baltimore all the way down to every county that we have, and with this outreach, they'll be there to listen and communicate and inform and also listen to the people of what needs they have; getting down to their tribal card or what services they may need in conjunction with their tribal leadership.

Our culture stands very firm with me, and it's non-negotiable. Our past elections protected our identity at all times. In our little communities such as Union Chapel, Mount Airy, and all the communities in between, elders got together many generations ago and protected our culture and established ways of educating our people, which lead to the fine institution that we're sitting in today. We must study our cultural history and engage our young people to be self-determined. We will convene cultural think tanks and round tables to define control -- to define, control, and determine who we are as a people; not through stereotypes who others say we are, or not even what the Bureau of Indian Affairs says we are, but what -- who we say we are.

And we can begin with archaeological facts

and proof that natives have been living beside Moss Neck Swamp for the last 10,000 years. We will support and promote our artists, first and foremost, in culture; our musicians. We will support and grow our culture center, and we will try -- this will take some time, but bring back our beloved Strike at the Wind.

We have to have involvement, involvement from everyone. We will put together a Lumbee tribal government summit, and with this, we're going to get ideas. How can we move better forward? How can we work with the tribal council? The administration? With the people? The people have to be empowered, so tonight, I'm charging you: you're going to be empowered.

We must first protect our elders and our youth and our out-of-school youth. Elders must be secure and comfortable, whatever we have to do to make that happen. We want to create mentorships. Our young people deserve and must have mentors. I'm standing here before you tonight only through the grace of God, and I had many, many mentors. I have mentors now. I have a spiritual mentor. I have other mentors, but our children have to have mentorship so -- and the mentors have to come from

this group.

We have doctors, we have lawyers, entrepreneurs, any profession you can think of. Musicians, any realm of employment you can think of have to come together now, right now, and pull together and organize how we can mentor our young people, and that also includes volunteerism. You know, nobody ever became poor by giving to others. There's a lot of small groups out here that build handicap ramps for people. They build and create housing that the tribal council doesn't take care of sometimes, and we had the backpack program for children.

I would like to submit that we bring all of our resources together and we partner with the different groups doing this and have a more powerful influence on more people in a positive way. And through economic development -- I think the tribe has a tremendous opportunity to recruit industry and jobs here. There's a lot of companies that would like to partner with, I know, with the Lumbee Tribe to set up shop here, to build industry, to create jobs so that we can create our own prosperity so that we can be self-reliant, and so that we can have partnerships

that can stand for all time. We want to put a government in place now that many generations will stand when I'm gone, where they're gone, and when you people take over and help govern, then the system will still be in place that will be positive for the people and these things I'm talking about will stand.

And we must extend opportunity through prosperity. We must have unity. I pledge to work tonight with the tribal council, and I will respect you for all time as my brothers and sisters and all the work that we do. We will have community meetings where I will visit, if you will have me. We will go to each and every district that you represent together to the people and represent the people and listen to the people and their concerns and communicate with them. I will work and try to collaborate with all centers of power: local, state, and federal. We have Mr. Will Collins here tonight from the North Carolina Department of Commerce who is willing by his presence here tonight. He's willing, standing ready to collaborate with the Lumbee Tribe.

We will collaborate with centers for education: the public schools, UNC Pembroke, the

community colleges,-- and with the tribe's here tonight, let me say, I thank you so much for attending tonight, and you have my word and my commitment that we will build bridges together, and we will partner together, and we will make all of us strong.

Last, let me say something that's been really heavy on my heart. At one time in my life, I wasn't a very savvy tech person, and I'm probably not now. Throughout necessity, I had to become. When texting first came into play, I would call my sons on their cell phones for two hours. They would not answer their phone, but if you text them, they'd text for two hours, so I had to learn how to text -- but social media can be a positive thing. Our campaign proved that.

It can be used in a positive way. A positive instrument to bring people together for a common cause and a common purpose, but what's happened, and it's happened so many times in our past and is prevalent now: People use social media to hurt one another. You know, tribes, our people within ourselves, have wars on each other for many, many generations, and tonight, it must stop. You know, we should be kind to each other. We are a

beautiful people.

Everybody in this building -- there's different races, different backgrounds that are here tonight to show their commitment and partnering with the Lumbee Tribe and the other nations here from across North Carolina. This should be a beacon of hope. All people, all people can come together if we choose to do so, but when you're hateful and when you're hurtful, you destroy someone's reputation or try to destroy someone's family or their business. Just because you're sitting at a computer and you can do it with no consequence, it's wrong. It's wrong.

The night of our election Preacher Tim challenged me to do one thing and one thing only: he said love people. Love people. Love everybody, and I gave him my word that I would, and I've given God my word on that. So we have a chance here to embrace hope and faith and love to where we can make something positive because nothing is going to be positive unless you have love in it. Unless you feel it from your heart and your soul, and like the song said, our heart is a drum. Our hearts beat the same way. We communicate with our spirits and our hearts, and

that's important, but the negative things break that down, and we have to get away from that.

So let's tonight -- let's uplift all people. Let's have faith, hope, and love. Let's have mentors. If one of our young people falls astray and gets on the wrong path -- and trust me, I have been on many, many wrong paths. Let's bring the old path and the new path together. Let's have mentorships. If one of us falls to the side, then we're going to pick our brother or our sister up. We're going to dust them off. We're going to dust them off and encourage them so that they can go on the right path and on the good path and go forward in life.

So the old path and the new path -- let's bring them together tonight. And, you know, I still believe in everything I'm saying tonight, and I know you still believe because you're here tonight. A lot of people still believe because they voted for our candidacy, so they still believe, and I know you feel and how you care about the things that we're talking about. So I know that if we believe in who we are, and we know our path, and we have a great opportunity with 8A.

We'll talk about it in the months to come.

For the tribe to become self-prosperous to the point where full federal recognition will be inconsequential. We will pursue full federal recognition, but we have an opportunity to be prosperous; standing alone to where nobody can say who we are. We know who we are, we know how to employ our own people, we know how to treat our own people, we know how to protect our own people, and that will permeate throughout all this local area and through the whole nation.

I want to thank God for this opportunity to serve the Lumbee people and for your support, patience, and faith, and let me just say for once and for all: May God bless the Lumbee people, and may God bless everyone in this room tonight. Thank you and God bless you.