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No Higher Standard

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The presidential inauguration of [Paul Lowell Haines, EdD, JD](#), was filled with music and historic symbols, attended by delegates from the nation's most recognized halls of learning, and punctuated by Haines' inaugural address, *No Higher Standard*.

Haines was officially installed as Taylor University's 31st President on October 20 in the Kesler Student Activities Center. The event, attended by nearly 2,000 students, faculty, staff, alumni, friends, and delegates from around the United States and beyond, was the centerpiece of [a number of inauguration-related activities](#) that began with the presentation of an honorary doctorate to Haines' pastor, Steve Poe, who serves as lead pastor of North Park Church in Indianapolis, one of the nation's largest and fastest growing churches. It continued with a Thursday evening outdoor performance by Haines, his brothers Doug and Terry, and other friends and fellow musicians from Haines' student years. Following Friday's inauguration ceremony, an Academic Colloquium in the Rediger Chapel/Auditorium examined faith, discipleship, and community. The day came to an end when [Steve Amerson](#), a 1976 Taylor alumnus widely known and loved as *America's Tenor*, joined the Marion Philharmonic Orchestra on the stage of the Rediger Chapel/Auditorium for an inauguration celebration concert.

"The inauguration of a president on any college campus is an event of significance that reaches well beyond the person who is vested with the office of president," said Haines. "More importantly, it is a celebration of the history, heritage, people, educational mission, and, in Taylor's case, religious purposes, that are essential to the life of the institution of higher learning.

“From the time my wife, Sherry, and I solemnly accepted the call to serve as Taylor’s President and First Lady, we have looked forward to this celebration with a deep sense of purpose, humility, gratitude, and awe, and certainly, an urgent reliance on God,” Haines added.

Haines, a 1975 Taylor alumnus and former member of Taylor’s Board of Trustees, succeeded Dr. Eugene B. Habecker, now Taylor’s President Emeritus, on June 1, 2016. Haines was chosen by Taylor’s Board following a nationwide search. In addition to his Taylor degree, Haines holds a Doctorate of Education from Penn, a Juris Doctorate from the Maurer School of Law at Indiana University, and a Master’s degree from Ball State University.

Three former Taylor presidents, Drs. Jay Kesler, David Gyertson, and Habecker, as well as longtime Taylor administrator and one-time acting president Dr. Daryl Yost, joined Haines on the inauguration platform and played roles in the ceremony.

Also present was a large contingent of delegates from numerous schools including Harvard and Penn of the Ivy League; sister Christian colleges Wheaton, Indiana Wesleyan, and Calvin; as well as Kansas, Indiana, Purdue, Ball State, Franklin, DePauw, and many more. In attendance as well were representatives of the Sinoe County Association in the Americas (SCAA), who were born in the home region of legendary Taylor student Samuel Morris.

Music for the inauguration ceremony was performed by Hope Oaks, an Indianapolis-area bagpiper, and Haines’ friends and former Taylor classmates, Amerson, Doug Haines ’79 (the brother of the president), Phil Madeira ’76, and Alex Moir ’75. Also performing was the Taylor Chorale and Taylor Wind Ensemble.

And luminaries who attended to give congratulatory greetings included Susan W. Brooks, U.S. Representative for Indiana’s 5th congressional district; Shirley V. Hoogstra, President of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities; Stan D. Gaede, President of the Christian College Consortium; David W. Wantz, President of Independent Colleges of Indiana; David W. Wright, President of Indiana Wesleyan University; and Nancy C. Dayton, Faculty Moderator at Taylor University. A congratulatory message from Michael R. Pence, Vice President of the United States, was also read.

As Haines was officially installed as Taylor’s president, he was presented with a walking stick and Bible used by Taylor’s namesake, Bishop William Taylor, as well as the presidential medallion worn by Haines’ presidential predecessors.

“It was here that administrators and faculty took an interest in me and challenged me to challenge myself to not accept the mediocre, the ordinary, the marginal, the average, but to reach higher, to meet the challenge, to engage the world, and to impact my fellow men and women positively, and it was here that I was encouraged to deepen my faith in my Lord Jesus Christ, to look to His living Word for guidance, and to dedicate my life to His purposes,” Haines told the crowd.

Haines addressed a number of challenges facing higher education in general and Christ-centered higher education in particular during his address—issues that include declining interest in and

support for the liberal arts, increasing financial pressures, expanding government regulation and intervention, and changing demographics.

“The Christian college, once the foundation of American higher education, is not immune to these significant concerns,” Haines said. “Indeed, for it, the rapidly changing landscapes and environments that exist today also include meeting head-on, changing cultural norms and evolving legal authority that, at times, are inconsistent or conflict with the faith-based mandates to which it subscribes, and the deeply held religious beliefs to which it is subject.”

Haines outlined a series of strategies which will be employed by Taylor University in the coming months that include adherence to Taylor’s historic mission and to biblical teachings; continued and increased offerings of the highest quality academic programs; educating students to better understand their Christian faith and equipping them to make a difference for good in the world; collaborative work with fellow colleges and universities; doing all things as Christ calls us to do, in His Name and for His glory; and finally moving forward in the confidence that Christ Himself will provide for every need.

“There is no higher standard, and we will give our all to achieve it,” Haines said.

Haines spent the first 10 years of his professional career at Taylor, starting as a residence hall director and later rising to the positions of Dean of Students and Vice President. He left Taylor 30 years ago to attend law school and later rose to the level of partner at one of the nation’s largest law firms, Indianapolis-based Faegre Baker Daniels. It was there he served dozens of colleges and universities across the country, along with churches and faith-based organizations, private foundations, museums, and many other nonprofit organizations.

Haines’ wife Sherry, also a Taylor graduate, spent 35 years as an art teacher in public and private schools, most recently at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis. The Haineses are parents to one daughter, Hannah, who is also a Taylor University alumna and a registered nurse with IU Health.

“As I have considered how unlikely it may seem for me, a person in the home stretch of his career and, frankly, a bit ‘long in the tooth,’ to take on this assignment, I, too, am nonplussed,” Haines said. “But then I am quickly reminded that each of us is in a constant state of preparation for what God has for us next. And like the story of old in the Book of Esther, maybe, just maybe God has prepared us, and even Sherry and me, for such a time as this.”

To watch the Inauguration video, click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gt75odyseQM>.