

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Greeting at the Investiture of Dr. Cheryl Davenport Dozier, Savannah State University April 12, 2013

Chancellor Huckaby, Honorable Board of Regents members, University System of Georgia officials, distinguished participants in this august Investiture ceremony, Savannah State University faculty, staff, students, alumni, retirees, and friends, members of the Dozier family, Chancellors and Presidents from the higher education community throughout the United States and, lastly, my fellow brother and sister presidents and their designees representing the universities and colleges of the University System of Georgia, I have been asked to salute Dr. Cheryl Davenport Dozier on behalf of my scholars-administrator colleagues who ably serve as chief executive officers of Georgia's public University System.

In their engaging and insightful book about leadership, Barbara Mackoff and Gary Wenet¹ interviewed among others Dr. Ruth Simmons, the great-granddaughter of slaves, the daughter of a Texas sharecropper, and (at the time) the president of Brown University. Upon asked to know what kept her up at night, Dr. Simmons responded that it was not whether or not she could meet the challenges of the job. She knew she was more than able to do so. But she wondered: "Could I take the job and still be the person my mother wanted me to be?"

Dr. Dozier, your presidential colleagues within the University System of Georgia are honored to assemble before you and bear witness to this moment of grace for the Savannah State University family and the higher education community as a whole. We come as colleagues, to be sure, but we also come as those who are perfectly willing to lend a hand and an ear whenever you need us. We come to celebrate your inauguration day with all the joy and promise that it brings. We come to congratulate you in advance for the splendid work you will do at Savannah State University and for the Thunderbolt community. We come to remind you to hold fast to those ideas and ideals that have allowed you to remain the apple of your late mother's eye and the woman she knew you would become: a woman in perfect balance and fully empowered.

From your University System of Georgia colleagues and me, congratulations and fare thee well!

Everette J. Freeman President

¹ Barbara Mackoff and Gary Wenet, Leadership as a Habit of Mind. New York: Authors Choice Press, 2005, p. 137.