

Southeastern University President Honored in Emotional Inauguration Ceremony

In an emotional and inspirational ceremony within Bush Chapel on Nov. 18, Dr. Kent Ingle was officially inducted as the 15th president of Southeastern University.

The first words of his inaugural address embodied the new energy and perspective he and his team have brought to campus.

“I never thought I’d wear bling like this,” said Ingle, , referring to the large, gold presidential chain hanging from his neck.

It was a light instant in the midst of moments of reflection, worship, and forward-thinking.

“This is not about me,” Ingle continued. “This is a moment for all of us to give God glory for who He is and His provision for Southeastern University.”

With members of Ingle’s family, the Southeastern Board of Regents, faculty, staff, the student body and distinguished guests in attendance, Ingle cast a vision for the university during his address. As well as giving thanks to those who helped him during his spiritual and professional journeys, he introduced seven priorities that he sees as central to Southeastern’s mission.

Those priorities are: 1) Being a university committed to Christ-like formation; 2) Pursuing educational breadth and depth; 3) Having a faculty of distinction and an intellectually stimulating environment; 4) Being a university

that thinks globally and promotes diversity; 5) Possessing a commitment to serving human need in our community and communities around the world; 6) Being characterized as a community of grace; and 7) Remaining student-focused at all times.

Before laying out his vision for the university, Ingle encouraged the SEU community to hold firm to its core beliefs while also being sensitive to the culture around it.

“We must look inward with conviction and outward with courage,” he said.

In addition to giving encouragement, Ingle also received exhortation and support from some of his mentors, including Dr. George Wood, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God; Dr. Bob Cook, president of the Alliance for Assemblies of God Higher Education, and Dr. Don Argue, chancellor of Northwest University.

Each shared stories of watching Ingle grow in his ministry.

Argue, who hired Ingle to be dean of the College of Ministry at Northwest, remarked how he recognized early on the leadership abilities of his former co-worker. He also said it was clear God had called Ingle to Southeastern.

“When things move in the will of God, it’s wonderful how things fall in place,” Argue said.

Cook reflected on meeting Ingle’s family when they moved to Denver in the 1970s, including watching Hank Aaron break baseball’s home run record with Ingle and his father, Joe, at the Ingles’ home in April 1974. Cook also remembered being at the hospital when Joe Ingle passed away nine years later, and recalled being a source of support for the Ingle family when Ingle’s sister was killed in a car accident.

“I salute you for standing strong in sorrow and in heartache,”

Cook said to Ingle.

Wood opened his remarks with a light warning.

"This is my wife's alma mater," he said with a smile, "so take good care of it."

He then gave four principles of leadership taken from 1 Kings in which David gave final instructions to Solomon. The principles were to retain, eliminate, evaluate and add, emphasizing that great organizations are always ready to eliminate those things that don't further their mission.

The ceremony, which was presided over by Chairman of the Board Rev. Terry Raburn, also included a Scripture reading from Philippians by Chancellor Tommy Barnett, an invocation from Distinguished Professor of Social Ethics Dr. Murray Dempster, and a reading by student Ruth Joseph. The Southeastern University Brass Quintet provided music throughout the ceremony, and all in attendance also sang "To God Be the Glory" in unison.

In closing, Ingle challenged those in attendance to work together "shoulder-to-shoulder" in moving Southeastern forward.

"God bless all of you, and God bless Southeastern University," he said.