

Honors Convocation – Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner, Faculty Senate President

April 17, 2017

“To Whom Much is Given”

Tonight, you represent the celebrated of SMU. You worked hard to get here, harder to excel, and hardest to achieve the honor you are afforded tonight.

Life is not a level playing field, as you know. Some of you entered with challenges that others did not have to face. Others of you surmounted hurdles after arriving. This is a night to celebrate, for you are our **“hall of famers”**.

I have struggled to choose one message to give you in the three minutes allotted to me. It could have been

To whom much is given, more can be invested. Or

To whom much is given, doors will open. Or

To whom much is given, power will soon follow.

These may all be true. However, I leave you with this sobering thought:

To whom much is given, much is required.

That could mean:

To use your knowledge to discourage injustice,

For that is SMU.

To shoulder your honors to carry a cause,

For that is SMU.

To use your voice to proclaim,

“There is no such thing as a lesser person.”

For that is SMU.

To use your mastery of language

To hear others into speech.

For that is SMU.

In 1916, a student was coming to campus one morning when he saw the ***University***, Dallas Hall on the hill. He was inspired to write a song. Perhaps it was a “liminal moment.” There is no statue of this young student, no plaque, not even a brick with his name.

YET all of you have sung his song:

Varsity

Oh, we see the Varsity,
Varsity, Varsity
As she towers o'er the hill
Over there.
And our hearts are filled with joy
SMU, SMU
Alma Mater, we'll be true
Forever!

The writer's name was student Lewis N. Stuckey, an SMU theology student. He gave his life in service to ministry, pastoring United Methodist Churches in Carrollton and in Farmers Branch, Texas. Stuckey knew: "To whom much has been given, much is required."

Tonight, our hearts are filled with joy as we celebrate your achievements. You come before us as those who have excelled at our Alma Mater. May I say on behalf of the 796 faculty that I represent, we are so very proud of you. May your lives and mine finish the sentence:

"To whom much is given....." Thank you.