My daughter is a college student and helps to update me for the 21st century. On my left arm, I wear a Samsung Smart Watch which allows me to receive emails, phone calls, weather reports, music, alerts, etc. My daughter encouraged me to buy this so I would be current. The only mishap so far is when I forgot to turn the ringer off in a meeting the Provost. Unfortunately, a relative’s ring tone is a loud dog bark, and we looked all over the Provost’s office for a loose animal. On my right arm, I wear something equally if not more important. It is the wrist band that participants received at the SMU flagpole rally for Unity and Human Dignity on November 11th. I will read the words in a moment.

I represent 740 faculty who have worked conscientiously to prepare you for your adult engagement in the 21st century. To commence means to begin. As you begin your solo voyage away from the hilltop, we the faculty are confident that you have the resources for current challenges and opportunities in a rapidly changing world. You also know how to ask for help when you need it. As you saunter forth today, I give you the words on my right wrist: “There is no such thing as a lesser person.” The faculty here at SMU has shown you how very gifted you are. May you increasingly be the person you were created to be and delight in that awareness. At the same time, may you and I both grow in our respect for those from whom we differ. For, there is no such thing as a lesser person. Now, we commence!

Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner, President of the Faculty Senate

December 17, 2016