



FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
HARRY K. MOON, M.D., FACS, FRCSEd



President Moon's Investiture Speech
Friday, January 31, 2025

Chairman Palmer, members of the Board of Trustees, deans and university officers...our wonderful guest speakers and performers...the NSU community...and honored guests.

Thank you for joining me on this special day...a day that is infinitely more about you than about me.

I'm humbled and honored to have the support and endorsement of NSU's Board of Trustees with its collective years of wisdom, stewardship and dedication to our university. And I am deeply privileged to have the opportunity to work so closely with the Chairman of the Board Mr. Charlie Palmer and our Vice Chairman Dr. Barry Silverman.

Since you announced this succession plan back in September 2023, your leadership and governance has stood out from those of many other colleges and universities today for the thoughtfulness and stability of this transition.

And through it all, I'm grateful to all of you (*gesture to the platform group and NSU audiences*) ...our provost...our deans... our senior leaders and vice presidents...faculty...health-care professionals...

...and, of course... (*gesturing to the crowd*) our students and alumni...those of you here today and those at locations across Florida, around the nation and around the globe...for the support you've given me and the commitment to NSU that you demonstrate every day.

I also want to recognize the countless contributions of our staff and our vendor-partners who work tirelessly and selflessly every day to keep our university on its path to excellence.

You are the critical link in the success of our university...and I look forward with great anticipation to our journey going forward.

Before I talk a bit about that journey, allow me to express my deep appreciation to my wonderful and accomplished partner of 41 and a half years, my wife, Ann Marie, to my children Savannah, Lauren, Kyle and Hunter and grandchildren, and to my extended family

and closest friends, many of whom are here with us today. I owe so much to all of you. Without question, I would not be standing here without your guidance, support, inspiration and encouragement. My love to you all.

On this occasion...I'm also filled with memories of mentors and heroes who have guided and inspired me over the years.

My professional journey really began when I was young. I grew up in a small town in Alabama, 5,000 people, and my next-door neighbor was the general surgeon at our 25-bed hospital. I knew early on I wanted to be like him.

Our families were close and in my teenage years I talked to him about becoming a surgeon. He could not have been more helpful or supportive. This man was a true general surgeon. He trained at the University of Pennsylvania but chose to come to a small town in the Deep South to practice.

To my good fortune he gave me a job in the hospital doing lab work over the summer, taking x-rays at night and on the weekends.

My first mentor's name was Howard Irwin. His enduring care for his patients, his self-reliance, his pursuit of excellence with limited resources formed a powerful and fundamental role model for me... one for which I'm forever grateful.

Since those early days, I've been fortunate to have had a number of very special mentors along the way. But one of them stands out among them all...a man who has been a professional and personal mentor. And a man who has been a role model for me over many decades now.

Dr. Ian Taylor, a world leader and inventor in life-changing surgical techniques, was as paramount as my next-door neighbor in deepening my sense of meaning and fulfilling my own vision of what a surgeon-researcher-teacher-mentor should be I carry with me his pursuit of knowledge, his sharing professionalism and his quest for excellence.

Throughout my career in medicine, business and academia, I have been blessed by the support, camaraderie, commitment and challenges of so many great leaders, including several who are here with us today who, freely and without hesitation, gave of their time and talent to help and guide me. This day is all about you...the inspiration and motivation you've given me to meet the highest of standards.

It's that very commitment...that resolve... that will propel Nova Southeastern University to unprecedented heights as the top private university in our region.

That is the path I see in front of us...a path to become our region's premier private university...a path that will harness our unique academic, research, health care and

intellectual assets...a path that will embrace and exploit these assets to create an innovative educational model that puts our students, patients and communities at the forefront of everything we do.

I see us heading down this path toward excellence and leadership as one team.

Our vision...and our team...will be guided by three foundational elements.

Our purpose.

Our path forward.

And our promise.

In the short film that preceded this speech, I talked about the importance of the Hippocratic Oath written in the 4th century B-C. That oath to uphold the highest standards of integrity was not the only thing the early Greeks taught us about the advancement of ethics and society.

They also reasoned on the nature of why we exist.

At NSU, we exist for one very simple and powerful purpose: To ignite the light of discovery and human potential to enrich lives, enhance well-being and create a better future for all mankind.

This purpose speaks to the collective power of NSU academics, health care, research and innovation. How they collectively transform lives, careers, personal well-being and communities. They create the future.

That simple but compelling purpose will serve as our North Star today, tomorrow and for decades to come.

We're 60 years old as a university and...unlike many others...we have a history of focusing first on advanced degree professional education.

This includes a history of being among the first...and best...to recognize needs and respond to them with agility and impact.

We led in distance learning.

We led in converting to online learning and weathered the COVID storm well ahead of most others.

We led in combining breadth and depth in building an interdisciplinary and integrated medical and health care portfolio.

We led in creating a footprint across Florida, into Puerto Rico and across the United States to meet student and employer needs where they are.

And we will continue to lead as the world demands new and better approaches to education, research, health care outcomes and career readiness.

There's no question our higher education, health care and research landscapes are under pressure to keep up with evolving student, employer and public demands.

Higher education is more important than ever, but new approaches and models are clearly needed.

You can't go a day without hearing about the need to reform, revitalize and reinvent the very foundations of higher education.

It is a call we're hearing not just in the U.S. but around the world.

Consider what the president of Harvard University had to say about higher-education reform.

"The inertia of a massive university is formidable."

"A good past is positively dangerous if it makes us content with the present and so unprepared for the future."

Those were the words of Charles W. Eliot at his investiture in 1869.

And I would contend they have never been more relevant...or resonant...than today.

We are at an inflection point...all of us in higher education.

At NSU, we've grown into one of the most dynamic, diverse and influential private universities in the Southeast.

From this position of strength, we're poised to take this great institution to new heights of transformative academic achievement and life-changing health care and research innovations...all supported by long-term investments in our students, patients, faculty, staff, alumni, partners, and communities.

Our path forward starts with preparing our students for purposeful careers that transform lives and society. We will accomplish that through a value-driven education model that accelerates the path to undergraduate, graduate, doctoral and professional degrees.

At the heart of this is a student- and employer-centered curriculum that answers the high demand for workforce development.

Here is what that means.

We will develop a model similar to the European model to compress the time and course work required to achieve a bachelor's degree and terminal M-D, D-O and D-D-S degrees from eight to six years.

We will develop compressed pathways in all our graduate and professional programs.

And we will do so while becoming more selective in our undergraduate admissions and increasing our dual-admission programs. We want to lower the cost and reduce the debt of education...because education is the fundamental equalizer and greatest liberator of humankind.

Let's remember that Nova Southeastern University has always excelled at...and been focused on...creating and delivering the most relevant and valuable graduate and professional programs. This is what differentiates us from our competitors.

It is this focus, this excellence in advanced degree education and career preparation that will allow us to attract the very best educators, researchers, innovators and students across the array of fields in which we lead.

From business to law and criminal justice...from health care to ocean sciences...from technology to entrepreneurship...from the arts and humanities...technology will lead us to a place we cannot yet see. Our embrace of the arts and humanities provides for the development of communicative skills and humanism that is so critical for a successful society.

We will focus strategically on providing a distinctive and advantageous pathway to advanced degrees that will enable our students and graduates to achieve purposeful careers, to realize their ambitions and to make our world a better place.

Our path forward will also continue a journey to become one of the nation's top-tier research institutions as we achieve Carnegie R1 status as a top-tier research institution. We will recruit and maintain a world-class research and teaching faculty.

We can be at the center of world-changing breakthroughs in life science, technology, engineering, social science, health care delivery and human services. Our world-class

oceanographic research, coastal-resiliency and professional workforce- development programs are foundational to the development of the blue economy.

In Florida today, the blue economy accounts for more than 800 billion dollars in economic impact, or almost 80 percent of the state's Gross Domestic Product. That includes everything from our fisheries and boating industries to tourism, transportation, environmental safety, research and so many other pursuits.

With the rise of the blue economy, the power of NSU Ocean as a catalyst for smart and sustainable development cannot be overestimated.

As a hub for research, collaboration and education, NSU Ocean is ideally positioned to deliver an immediate and lasting impact on Florida as it becomes the 10th largest economy in the world by 2030.

Another fundamental part of our path forward will also call upon us to create a premier academic health care system...NSU Health...that delivers better patient care in this rich environment of research and education.

I firmly believe the best of patient care occurs in this special environment of research and education, where the sciences and clinical expertise are balanced by the enrichments of the arts and humanities. Because this is what so often fosters the basic tenet of the physician -patient relationship- Hope and Trust.

NSU Health will play that trusted role...to integrate education, research and better patient care...here and across our campus communities.

And finally, our path forward will be enriched by strong and productive partnerships with business, government, and society...partnerships that will spur the innovations and inspirations necessary to transform higher education and advance society.

To support these ambitious goals, we will attract investors to elevate NSU's endowment to 1 billion dollars. This will allow us to diversify revenue sources through impactful research, health care initiatives and strategic commercial partnerships...ensuring sustainable growth and long-term success.

These are more than strategic imperatives. They are how we define excellence.

On our terms.

As leaders.

Without the biases and constraints of convention and prevailing norms.

This is our mountain to climb.
Our summit to reach. Our future to build.

Our promise to keep as the most committed and passionate team in higher education.

And just as physicians pledge to uphold the highest standards in medicine, all of us here pledge to uphold the highest standards in leading Nova Southeastern University.

While we...together...are on a journey of exploration, discovery, and transformation, one thing that will never change are the core values that have defined us and propelled us.

Our promise and core values will grow even stronger.

We are purposely student-centered and hold ourselves to the highest degrees of academic excellence in scholarship and research.

We support these values by unleashing innovation and creating opportunities for every student and professional we serve.

And when we combine these with our deep commitments to community service and diversity...all on a rock-solid foundation of integrity in all that we say and do...we stay true to our values.

As I look out at all of you here today, this is what I believe: When we bring together a shared purpose, a visionary path forward and the timeless values that have shaped and defined NSU, there's no limit to what we can achieve together.

And this is key—the word together. Together our collective strength and wisdom, create a powerful formula. None of this is about me or simply about the beginning of a new presidency. It's about all of us...all of you...not me.

The way I see it, my role is to be the coach...the coach who helps to bring in the best and the brightest to provide the fertile ground for growth and advancement. It's about creating the environment for change and adaptation for the future success of our team of faculty, staff researchers and clinicians for the students and patients they will serve, now and in the future.

Fostering achievement and impact is a profound reward.

This is what excellence looks like...creating the future while standing on the shoulders of giants who came before us.

Today we step into that future together. Thank you.