

Bruntmyer installed as president at Hardin-Simmons University

September 19, 2016

ABILENE—More than 2,000 people filled the Behrens Auditorium on the Hardin-Simmons University campus when HSU installed Eric Bruntmyer as its 16th president during an investiture ceremony that also marked the university's 125th anniversary.

As part of the ceremony, Bruntmyer received the symbols of his office—the university mace and university medallion—from Provost Thomas Brisco in the presence of former presidents Lanny Hall, Craig Turner and Jesse Fletcher.

Hardin-Simmons University installed Eric Bruntmyer as president. (HSU Photo) Bruntmyer reminded the investiture crowd about the vision of one of the school's early benefactors, James Simmons, who wanted the university to reflect Christ's love. Simmons preferred to call the school Christlieb College—the College of Christ's Love.

Bruntmyer also recalled early leaders in Abilene, such as Judge K.K. Leggett, Theo Vogel, George Phillips and E.T. Ambler, who provided funds, land and support to the university.

"Each person gathered in this place has an important and unique offering to give toward continuing our work for those who will come after we are long gone," Bruntmyer said. "Our actions today join the enduring 125-year legacy of Hardin-Simmons,

and the connection of Christ's love that binds us will propel us deep into

the future.”

Dennis Wiles, pastor of First Baptist Church in Arlington, reflected on his many fond memories as the Bruntmyer family’s pastor, and he called on the university to embrace its new First Family.

“Receive them well,” Wiles said. “They’re a dynamic young family. They’re going to bless you and be a blessing to this community.”

Taking his cue from the Apostle Paul, Wiles compared the Christian life to a race.

“God wants us to live an authentic life,” Wiles said. “God is an expert in designing

race courses that actually fit who you are. And that means God has done that not just for Eric Bruntmyer; he’s done that for every one of us. It’s our responsibility to find that course and find our way on it—and then, once we’re on it, to run and run with endurance.”

Other program personalities included Michael Walters, chairman of the HSU board of trustees and presidential search committee; David Hardage, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas; Phil Christopher, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Abilene; and Don Wiliford, dean of Logsdon School of Theology and Seminary.

Later, Bruntmyer received a proclamation from the city of Abilene presented by Mayor Norm Archibald, as well as a proclamation from Texas Gov. Greg Abbott’s office.

Based on reporting by Linnea Kirgan.