

MONICA WHITE: We will continue now with a welcome and greetings from the Honorable Frank A. Pagano, Chairman of the Fredonia College Council. Always a staunch supporter of SUNY Fredonia, Mr. Pagano was appointed by New York Governor David Patterson in 2009 to a seven-year term as chair of the Fredonia College Council.

After a successful career in banking and real estate development, Mr. Pagano was elected mayor of the Village of Fredonia in 1995. He served as mayor for three consecutive terms, during which Fredonia was chosen by *Business First* as the “Best Community in Western New York.” He also served a term as the President of the New York State Council of Mayors.

In addition to his role as chair of the council, Mr. Pagano served as chair of the Presidential Search Committee, which unanimously recommended Dr. Horvath to Chancellor Zimpher and the SUNY Board of Trustees. Mayor Pagano.

FRANK PAGANO: Thank you, Monica. On behalf of the Fredonia College Council as well as our community I’d like to welcome you all to SUNY Fredonia — one of the most beautiful campuses in the SUNY system — and to today’s memorable investiture of Dr. Virginia Schaefer Horvath.

In particular, I’d like to welcome President Horvath’s husband, Dr. Brooke Horvath, as well as her daughters, Emily Davey and Caitlin Carroll; and mother- and father-in-law, Eugene and Nancy Horvath.

Brooke, Ginny and their daughters have made a great deal of sacrifices over the last seven years, so that Ginny could serve our university. So I’d like to say to them, in doing so, you’ve not only allowed Ginny to pursue *her* dreams; you’ve

helped *thousands* of SUNY Fredonia students reach theirs. This ceremony today, as well as this week's celebration, is a way Fredonia can show you how much we appreciate all that you have sacrificed for us.

Speaking of sacrifices, I'd like to acknowledge Ginny's father, Mr. Paul Schaefer, who also joins us today.

Mr. Schaefer, I can only imagine what a proud moment this must be for you. Ginny has said repeatedly throughout these past few months that her parents' love and support were invaluable to her educational pursuits. You clearly worked and sacrificed a great deal to give your children every opportunity to succeed. As a parent, I know how hard we try to give our children every chance for success. Together with President Horvath's six siblings, many of whom have also joined us today with their families, you and your wife clearly accomplished that many times over. Congratulations to you, sir, and welcome.

I'd also like to welcome SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher and members of the board of Trustees, whose support throughout this transition has been critical and tremendously appreciated

Chancellor Zimpher has repeatedly shown what a great believer she is in public higher education. She has led national initiatives — most recently selecting Fredonia as a pilot campus for the nation's most comprehensive student debt management program — and her insights and determination for preparing tomorrow's leaders has moved SUNY into a global spotlight. I'd like to welcome and thank you and your staff, especially Associate Vice Chancellor Aimee Bernstein, for all of the guidance you offered during the search process.

I've had a very interesting vantage point throughout this process. As chair of both the council and the search committee, I had the privilege of seeing more than 50 applicants during a nationwide search come forward in hopes of leading this campus.

They all had a variety of strengths and expertise. They had different thoughts about, and goals for, our university. They had strong ideas and creative strategies.

But none of them fit the Fredonia persona as well as the woman seated behind me. She not only had the knowledge of the campus and the Western New York community; she had the clearest set of goals for where she would like to lead SUNY Fredonia — and she had our students at the center of every one of those goals.

Her ability to inspire the faculty is impressive. Her innovation skills are well documented. Her tireless work ethic is already legendary. And her passion for teaching and devotion to her students are unmatched. This is why we are all so excited to be here today. We know we have the chance to work with someone who truly cares, and who won't settle for anything less than success in our endeavors.

When I served as President of the New York State Conference of Mayors, I had the chance to interact with mayors who also had prominent colleges in their communities.

And I remember being amazed when I would hear many of them complain about having those institutions in their backyards. They talked about the headaches they caused; their differences of opinions and goals; their “problem”

students. But I would just sit there and smile, because I knew what a great relationship our Village and College maintain. That relationship always started at the top with the leadership shown by the President. Well, I can promise all of you here today that this relationship will only grow stronger under the leadership of President Horvath, whose commitment to community has been shown repeatedly, whether it's been the service learning initiatives she instituted as Vice President for Academic Affairs, or the four pillars of the new Power of Fredonia strategic plan, each of which has the word "community" in its title.

This is a proud moment for any campus, but for many of us today, it is especially so. For some, we are thrilled to see one of our own rise to such a position. Others are inspired to see a Western New York native — and a SUNY graduate — as our new leader. Still others are proud to see our campus' first female president. And many stand here beaming as they watch a hard-working friend and family member at a pivotal moment in her career.

Whatever your reasons, Fredonia's campus has been alive with excitement and anticipation ever since we announced her selection last March. Because above all else, we all know this: no one — and I repeat, no one — has our students' best interests in mind more than President Virginia Schaefer Horvath. On behalf of the College Council and the entire Fredonia and campus community, we pledge our support and best wishes for a successful tenure as President of this great university.