

1-8-1979

## UA3/5/4/1 John Minton Swearing In

John Minton

Western Kentucky University

Dero Downing

J. David Cole

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**Western Kentucky University**  
**UA3/5 John Minton**  
**Series 4 Interviews & Oral Histories**  
**Item 1 Swearing In**

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**Biographical/Historical Note:** The president's office was created in 1906. As Dero Downing's resignation went into effect January 8, 1979 Vice President John Minton was appointed interim president. He held this position through July 31, 1979 when Donald Zacharias was elected president.

John Minton was born in Cadiz , Kentucky on July 29, 1921. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Kentucky and a Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University. Prior to coming to WKU, Minton served as principal of Trigg County High School from 1953 to 1958. He became Associate Dean of Graduate Instruction in 1962, then Graduate Dean, and Administrative Vice-President in 1970. Minton served as Vice President of Student Affairs from 1979 until his retirement in 1986.

**Description:** Recording of John Minton's swearing in ceremony which includes remarks by J. David Cole, Judge Charles Reynolds and Dero Downing.

**Dates:** January 8, 1979

**Subject Analytics:**

Audio recording

Downing, Dero Goodman, 1921-2011

Minton, John Dean, 1921-2008

Oaths

Prayer

Regents (WKU)

Western Kentucky University

**Accession Information:** These records were transferred to the WKU Archives upon its creation.

**Access Restrictions:** none

**Preferred Citation:** UA3/5/4/1 John Minton Swearing In, WKU Archives, Bowling Green, Kentucky, USA.

**Processing Information:** Audiotape transcribed by Suellyn Lathrop, 2013.

# Oral History Recording List UA3.5.4.1 ~ Records

12/03/2013

Media ID	Side	Start time	Subject
Tape 1	1	00:00:00	<p><i>J. David Cole: If we might all stand then Reverend D___ will give the invocation.</i></p> <p>00:12 <i>Rev. D.: Let us pray. Lord God Almighty we give thanks that you have created this whole universe and ourselves in your image, you whose name is truth and in whom there is no falsehood. We thank you that there are institutions of our community that are dedicated to your worship and other institutions that are committed in seeking your truth. You've made us to be restless and we will not be content until we find ourselves in fullness with you. As our brother and friend John takes up the responsibility of administration of an institution of higher learning, we pray that you will continue in him the sweetness of spirit, the warmness of heart, the keenness of mind and the strength of body to fulfill these responsibilities. Bless us now in this ritual and keep us always in your love, always seeking your truth. For it is in your name and the name of truth we pray, amen.</i></p>
Tape 1	1	00:01:27	<p><i>JDC: I thank each of you for coming this morning on this very snowy and icy and cold morning. We are here to formalize the interim presidency of Dr. John Dean Minton. I would ask that Dr. Minton come forward and Judge Charles Reynolds come forward who will administer the oath. Judge Reynolds, if you would administer the oath of office to the interim presidency.</i></p>
Tape 1	1	00:02:06	<p><i>Charles Reynolds: Dr. Minton would you raise your right hand please. Repeat after me: I do solemnly swear . . .</i></p> <p><i>John Minton: I do solemnly swear . . .</i></p> <p><i>CR: that I will support the constitution of the United States . . .</i></p> <p><i>JM: that I will support the constitution of the United States . . .</i></p> <p><i>CR: the constitution of this Commonwealth . . .</i></p> <p><i>JM: the constitution of this Commonwealth . . .</i></p> <p><i>CR: and will be faithful . . .</i></p> <p><i>JM: and will be faithful . . .</i></p> <p><i>CR: and true to the Commonwealth of Kentucky . . .</i></p> <p><i>JM: and true to the Commonwealth of Kentucky . . .</i></p> <p><i>CR: so long as I continue a citizen.</i></p> <p><i>JM: so long as I continue a citizen.</i></p> <p><i>CR: That I will faithfully execute . . .</i></p> <p><i>JM: That I will faithfully execute . . .</i></p> <p><i>CR: to the best of my ability . . .</i></p> <p><i>JM: to the best of my ability . . .</i></p> <p><i>CR: the office of president . . .</i></p> <p><i>JM: the office of president . . .</i></p> <p><i>CR: of Western Kentucky University . . .</i></p> <p><i>JM: of Western Kentucky University . . .</i></p> <p><i>CR: in an interim period . . .</i></p> <p><i>JM: in an interim period . . .</i></p> <p><i>CR: according to law.</i></p> <p><i>JM: according to law.</i></p> <p><i>CR: And I do further solemnly swear . . .</i></p> <p><i>JM: And I do further solemnly swear . . .</i></p>

Media ID	Side	Start time	Subject
			<i>CR: that since the adoption of the present constitution . . .</i>
			<i>JM: that since the adoption of the present constitution . . .</i>
			<i>CR: I . . .</i>
			<i>JM: I . . .</i>
			<i>CR: being a citizen of this state . . .</i>
			<i>JM: being a citizen of this state . . .</i>
			<i>CR: have not fought a duel . . .</i>
			<i>JM: have not fought a duel . . .</i>
			<i>CR: with deadly weapons within this state . . .</i>
			<i>JM: with deadly weapons within this state . . .</i>
			<i>CR: nor out of it.</i>
			<i>JM: nor out of it.</i>
			<i>CR: Nor have I sent . . .</i>
			<i>JM: Nor have I sent . . .</i>
			<i>CR: or accepted a challenge . . .</i>
			<i>JM: or accepted a challenge . . .</i>
			<i>CR: to fight a duel . . .</i>
			<i>JM: to fight a duel . . .</i>
			<i>CR: with deadly weapons.</i>
			<i>JM: with deadly weapons.</i>
			<i>CR: Nor have I acted as second . . .</i>
			<i>JM: Nor have I acted as second . . .</i>
			<i>CR: returned a challenge . . .</i>
			<i>JM: returned a challenge . . .</i>
			<i>CR: nor assisted any person . . .</i>
			<i>JM: nor assisted any person . . .</i>
			<i>CR: thus offending . . .</i>
			<i>JM: thus offending . . .</i>
			<i>CR: so help me God.</i>
			<i>JM: so help me God.</i>
			<i>CR: This was a pleasure.</i>
			<i>JM: Thank you Judge.</i>
			<i>JDC: Congratulations.</i>

Tape 1	1	00:03:39	Applause
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Tape 1	1	00:03:58	<i>JDC: I've expressed to Dr. Minton the full and complete confidence of the Board of Regents in his tenure as interim president of Western Kentucky University. I would call upon each of you here to join with Dr. Minton and with the Board in ensuring that this period of time will be a strong and progressive and proud moment in the university. I would be remiss at this time if I did not again express publically to Dero and Harriet Downing our sincere best wishes for their coming months and years in their continued service and association with Western Kentucky University.</i>
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*In terms of the weather President Downing I can assure you the Caribbean is much warmer and much nicer. I would ask Dero to come forward now and make formal remarks.*

Media ID	Side	Start time	Subject
Tape 1	1	00:05:01	<p><i>Dero Downing: Thank you Mr. Cole and congratulations to you Dr. Minton. I think it is highly appropriate that we have gathered here a representative group, a broad cross section of the university family and the family and friends of Dr. John Minton. This university, as those who are here today know believes in tradition and in symbolism. I think the symbolic significance of a formal oath of office administered by a Western graduate and longtime friend and supporter of the university is in itself a good beginning for Dr. Minton, for you in this important position of interim president. Mr. Cole I'd like to congratulate you and other members of the Board of Regents for having chosen Dr. Minton and placing him in this position. I think you certainly have used excellent judgment in that regard and he unquestionably prove deserving of the confidence which you have placed in him. I want to express my personal thanks for the many ways in which those of you here and others throughout the university, across this community, across the Commonwealth of Kentucky have extended encouragement and support to the Downing family and through the years have given us the opportunity to serve this university.</i></p> <p><i>I called Dr. Minton at a fairly early hour this morning and told him that I wanted to be at least among the first to call to express the hope that as he sat in that chair that this first day would be pleasant, productive and the days in the future would be the same. I was calling from 2482 in the Alumni Center and that's where I'll be spending some time at least in the coming weeks and months and I will not in any way impose upon him or upon others in the university by being around other that times you may suggest that I might rendered some meaningful service. And I invited him to suggest ways that I might give support to his endeavors.</i></p> <p><i>I want to mention one other thing and that is that without exception every person in this university who has commented in any way on the appointment of Dr. Minton to this position has done so in a commendable, complimentary, positive, supportive way. That has been true all across the state as I have gone various places to alumni meetings and either in social gatherings or professional meetings there has been nothing Dr. Minton except positive support from every source. I know this is going to be the case and have confidence in the ability that John Minton has to move this university along with the continued help and support of all those providing that as you've done over the years. Thank you so much.</i></p>
Tape 1	1	00:08:40	<i>Applause</i>
Tape 1	1	00:08:54	<i>JDC: Thank you very much President Downing. We're very pleased to have Ron Clark and Steve Thornton here this morning who are members of the Board. But I think the person here this morning I think most appropriate and I would introduce to those gathered here the interim president of Western Kentucky University, John D. Minton.</i>
Tape 1	1	00:09:18	<i>Applause</i>
Tape 1	1	00:09:28	<p><i>JM: Thank you Mr. Cole and President Downing and greetings to all of you who must be friends of mine or you wouldn't be here. About a month ago I made some remarks to the Board of Regents and to the president. At that time I expressed my appreciation to the Board and to President Downing for the confidence which they placed in me in recommending and approving me for this position. At that time I also made the statement that I had been at Western for some twenty years and over that period of twenty years I've had the opportunity of being associated with and working with many fine people. And at that time I think I listed some various groups which were the Board and the president and the past presidents, the faculty, the staff and the student body. I _____ especially on the fact that I came here as an instructor in the History Department and over that period of twenty years I have had the privilege of having many, many good students in my classes. And I also at that time commented on the fact that the members of the History Department used to tell me that members of the staff used to be students of theirs and I used to say, "Well that probably won't ever happen to me because I won't be here this long." And I could hardly imagine how it could but as I look over this group and on this staff and as I look through this faculty and staff that situation is true today. The only other group that I probably did not specifically mention at that time was the friends of mine, special friends of mine that are here this morning. And so I want to express my appreciation to all of you, first as friends, then in the other categories that I have mentioned because I have worked and been with you in all of those areas. All of you know me well enough to know I hope that I'm just John Minton and that's the way I'm going to be until the Board selects a successor, a permanent president. I intend to be president while I'm in here and I intend to make whatever decisions are necessary to be made. It is with much humility and with a grateful heart and the solicitation of your support and your prayers that I engage in this undertaking. This university's been good to me and to my family. Two of them are here. One is out at Oklahoma State in the graduate work. For those of you that don't, haven't met my wife this is my first lady for several years.</i></p>
Tape 1	1	00:13:10	<i>Applause</i>
Tape 1	1	00:13:18	<i>JM: That's my son John.</i>
Tape 1	1	00:13:20	<i>Applause</i>

Media ID	Side	Start time	Subject
Tape 1	1	00:13:23	<i>JM: Now those of you that know me real well and have been in my office several times and particularly those real close friends of mine that come in there and we sit down and we discuss from day to day whatever the situation might be that we need to discuss know that and to a certain extent I clutter my desk with trinkets. And I've been told by some of my probably more frank advisors that I do not need to clutter this desk in here with some of the trinkets that I have on my desk upstairs. I have a decision maker, an executive yo-yo and an idiot stick, a hee-haw stick those things that combine history and folklore and whatever else you might have. President Downing passed to me the other afternoon a book I took home with me on the presidency. And as I picked it up and started looking into it and reading it I found that one thing that was written by a colleague of mine at the University of Miami years ago. And it had some fairly interesting chapters in it and one of them that really appealed to me and appeals to my philosophy as a teacher. One chapter says it had to do with the university or college and the title of the chapter was The Heart of the Matter: The Student. And I think that's really it. That's been the history of this university that the heart of the matter is the student. And a student that comes here as a student and leaves here as a citizen and the type of citizen that they've left here as is demonstrated by many of the people that are here this morning. And I think even though we could come to the second part of it I certainly being a faculty member and a professor of history cannot detract from the importance of the scholarly professors and teachers that we have.</i>
Tape 1	1	00:16:04	<i>Silence</i>
Tape 1	1	00:16:27	<i>JM: Also about a year ago I really don't believe brother D___ in predestination, but I thought I would initiate this desk with my first trinket. Our son Ernie gave us this little turtle two or three Christmases ago. So as I read that book the other night it said becoming a college president was an initiation into the Order of the Turtle. It said you could never go anywhere without sticking your neck out and also you must build around you a fairly hard shell or crust to withstand whatever. President Downing you know [unintelligible]. But I do say that in all humility and in the spirit of thankfulness for everything that I'll do the best job I can. Thank you.</i>
Tape 1	1	00:17:46	<i>Applause</i>
Tape 1	1	00:18:06	<i>JDC: The tenure of the turtle. I thank each of you for coming this morning.</i>