4-14-1989

UA3/8/10/1 Thomas Meredith Installation Banquet

WKU President's Office

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Biographical/Historical Note:
The president's office was created in 1906. The search for a new president began with Kern Alexander's resignation announcement on April 11, 1988. The Board of Regents elected Thomas Meredith as president August 5 and installed September 21, 1988. Under Meredith's leadership, the campus expanded with the purchase of the Bowling Green Center, creation the Institute of Economic Development and the implementation of the first strategic plan Western XXI. He also hired WKU's first female vice president, Barbara Burch. Meredith had served the university for a little over eight years when he announced his resignation February 5, 1997.

Thomas Carter Meredith was born in Owensboro December 7, 1941. He obtained his BS from Kentucky Wesleyan in 1963, his MS from WKU in 1966 and his PhD from the University of Mississippi in 1971. His early career was spent teaching high school in Owensboro, Kentucky and LaHarpe, Illinois. From there he moved into administrative positions in Jeffersonville, Indiana and the board of trustees of the State Institutions of Higher Learning in Mississippi. Meredith was vice chancellor for executive affairs at the University of Mississippi when he came to WKU in 1988.

Description: Banquet immediately prior to the installation of Thomas Meredith as president of WKU. Larnelle Harris is featured performing three songs.

Dates: April 14, 1989

Formats: 1 audiotape, 1 wav file, 1 mp3 file

Subject Analytics:
African Americans
Audio recording
Banquets
Blacks
Meredith, Thomas Carter, 1941-
Musicians
Singing
Western Kentucky University

Accession Information: These records were transferred to the WKU Archives from the President’s Office in accordance with the records retention schedule.
## Oral History Recording List
**04/21/2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media ID</th>
<th>Side</th>
<th>Start time</th>
<th>Subject</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tape 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>00:00:13</td>
<td>Thomas Meredith: If I might have your attention, please. I promised we wouldn't have a lot of introductions, but let me make just a couple, then a couple of announcements, a little entertainment and then we'll be on with the show. First of all let me, as I mentioned earlier for my family and so forth to be on the lookout for Regents. I want to make sure you know who they are. So without reading all of the names I would like for our current Board of Regents, if you would, please stand and be recognized please. Are we bashful? [applause]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tape 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>00:00:34</td>
<td>TM: We are delighted to have several former presidents of Western Kentucky University in the audience and I would like to ask them to stand as well please. [applause]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tape 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>00:01:06</td>
<td>TM: Thank you. Even though I would like to introduce everyone who traveled here from Mississippi today let me remember where the power is and ask those who are here from the Board of Trustees of state institutions of higher learning in Mississippi which is the governing board for all the institutions of higher learning in that state. Would you please stand. [applause]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tape 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>00:01:47</td>
<td>TM: The former executive director of that board and longtime friend of mine is here as well, Dr. Heath Rash, wife Jessie, where are you? [applause]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tape 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>00:02:22</td>
<td>TM: And one more individual introduction if you would a long time mentor of mine who is the president emeritus of the University of Oklahoma and former Chancellor of the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill who works with the Mississippi Board, or who has on many occasions in the past and has traveled the distance to be here today and I'd like to introduce Dr. Paul Sharp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tape 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>00:02:53</td>
<td>TM: Well, if I don't stop now, I won't get stopped. So let me do that. A couple quick announcements. One, Dr. Steve House, executive assistant, Steve where are you? Over there, okay. At the end of our time here together as you move that way, those of you who are not on stage, Steve will have reserve seat passes for you. And we have an area blocked off for you in the Van Meter Auditorium that will make your seating a little easier for you. So if you'll see Steve he'll put a pass in your hand. Secondly, some of you need rides back to the parking area in order to get to your regalia. We'll have one van in particular out front that someone will be waving some signal to let you know that that van is going to go back to the parking lot to get your regalia, but you'll need to move rather quickly. If you need to make that trip, we need you to move rather quickly to that van so they can get back and pick up some more folks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tape 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>00:04:24</td>
<td>Lamelle Harris singing How Excellent is Thy Name [applause]</td>
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</table>
LH: Thank you. You keep that up we’ll just stay here today and we won’t do anything else. It’s good to be here to be a part of a wonderful, wonderful exciting day. And you’ve met my wife already. There are another couple of people that I would like to introduce to you and give you the opportunity to say hello to. The lady that does our scheduling, she’s the only foreigner in our group, she’s from down in Florida but I’d like you to say hello to Mrs. Spur. She takes care of all our booking and stuff like that.

[applause]

And then another lady that works in the office in Florida, her name is Gina Coy. And she is from, are you from Murray? All right, stand up, we’ll let you stand up anyhow, okay.

[applause]

And then the gentleman who runs the sound and does a number of things very well, lives in Louisville and his name is Phil Hawkins. He’s got about five kids. He needs a big hand, okay.

[applause]

And of course, you’ve already met my wife a lovely lady, don’t you think? I just enjoy . . .

[applause]

And I got to tell you, she and I have embarked on a number of avenues and have been, well, it’s always a little scary to trod in unknown territory, you know. A lot of what we received here at Western helped us as we embarked on that journey. Then there’s been some other help we’ve had as well.

Lamelle Harris singing Great Is Thy Faithfulness

[applause]

LH: Amen! Now I, I don’t know if that was part of the deal to have church here today. I’m not sure about that. That’s okay. And all of God’s people said “Amen.”

Lamelle Harris singing Amen

LH: God bless you all and thank you.

[applause]

TM: I think I know what we’ll do at the inauguration today. Well, president’s love to showcase the talents of their students, but I can see now that we need to spend a little more time showcasing the talents of our alums as well. Lamelle thank you so much.

[applause]

TM: Now if you noticed a special look on someone’s face in here while all that was going on, a kind of a look of pride. It was coming from the gentleman who provided the beautiful music we all enjoyed today as we ate. Because this gentleman worked very closely with Lamelle Harris while he was here and maybe even a mentor we might call him, Dr. David Livingston. David.

TM: Now from here there will be vans back down the steps and out for those of you who would like to ride up. Of course there is the van for the academic regalia for those of you who need to go back to the lot. And for the hardy ones straight up the front out here up the hill is Van Meter Auditorium. If you are walking and there will be some of you, there will be a number of people who are also going up that way, who will be going to the area you are going to put on your robes and we’ll be able to show you where that is as you get up on top.

Thank you all so much for coming here. It is such a special, special day for this institution and we appreciate the fact that you wanted to be a part of that. And with that, Steve, unless there’s another announcement. Thank you very much.

[applause]

Lamelle Harris singing Amen

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