

**Acceptance Remarks by Dr. Debra Saunders-White
UNC Board of Governors
Occasion of the Election of the
Chancellor of North Carolina Central University
February 8, 2013**

It is with profound honor and humility that I stand before you this morning on the shoulders of so many, to become the 11th chancellor – elect of North Carolina Central University one of the jewels in the University of North Carolina system .

President Ross, President Hans, and members of the Board of Governors, thank you for trusting me to lead. I will be a servant leader President Ross. I will follow your example for you have led this great university with foresight and dignity. I will be your partner as we work to ensure that North Carolina Central University's family embraces all the opportunities to add to our great state's economic base.

To Dr. Perry, Mr. Epps, members of the search committee, members of the Board of Trustees, and to the entire Eagle community-faculty, students, staff, alumnae, alumni, and friends, your diligence throughout the selection process is consistent with NCCU's rich tradition and history of excellence. I thank you so very much for your confidence in my ability to continue our university's trajectory of international distinction.

To the honorable Judge Charles Becton, I look forward to your guidance as we work towards a smooth transition. North Carolina Central University has a strong legacy and your contributions to the institution will be forever etched in our history.

And to the retired Chancellor Charlie Nelms, I will work to continue the work that you started as you demonstrated that the Eagle community is agile and responsive to regional demands. You have left big shoes to fill...luckily, I wear heels.

W.E.B. DuBois stated that "if someone is going down the wrong road, he doesn't need motivation to speed him up. What he needs is education to turn him around." I believe that quality higher education is transformative and is our nation's most prized asset... without a doubt it is the most powerful economic engine especially for persons like myself and my three brothers who are all first generation college graduates....my mother grew up as a sharecropper in Northampton County, North Carolina, and my father (who is now in glory) was a used car salesman. They educated the four of us without incurring any debt – no loans, no grants, only by the sweat of their brow. They knew the value of higher education. For their sacrifices, I am eternally grateful!

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And finally, to my children, Elizabeth Paige and Cecil, I love you and, I stand before you today as your mother, proud to have you in my life as motivation and inspiration. I hope I will continue to make you proud.

I would like to reemphasize that I stand before you on the shoulders of some amazing colleagues who have become friends from wonderful institutions like my UNCW family, who are here today...to you...you made me more thoughtful, more reflective, and a better individual... for your support and encouragement and love... I thank you.

To my colleagues at the Department of Education, Secretary Duncan and Undersecretary Martha Kanter,Thank you, for allowing me to make my contribution to American Higher Education history.

To the students, faculty, staff, alumni/alumna, and friends of NCCU, I stand before you as a servant leader ready to earn your trust and your respect. I stand ready to continue the great legacy of our university and ready to explore new opportunities for greatness.

While our founding father in 1782 chose the Eagle as our national emblem, an emblem of freedom, our founder, James E. Sheppard chose the Eagle and said, the Eagle is *not a barnyard fowl*. Eagles are indeed majestic gliding in the sky as icons of courage and strength. Let us move forward seeking truth and providing meaningful service, let us soar like the very Eagles that we represent!

Now, colleague, friends and my new Eagle family... Let the journey begin!