Inauguration of David W. McInally as the Fifteenth President of Coe College
Introduction of the President
Richard J. Cook
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I am honored to stand before you this afternoon on this momentous occasion in the history of Coe College. I have known and admired Coe since the early 1990’s when I first met Jim Phifer, who was at the time a member of the Dean’s Council of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest. Coe is truly one of America’s great liberal arts colleges. Congratulations Jim and to everyone who played a part in Coe’s ascent to national prominence.

There is an abundance of positive things I could say by way of introduction of Dave McInally, but I confess I feel a bit like I am standing between a group of hungry students and a buffet table—I know it is your new president you want to hear, so I won’t stand in your way long.

Dave and I spent twelve years at Allegheny College working closely together, and I have developed an accurate measure of him as both a professional colleague and as a personal friend.

There are some words that come immediately to mind when I think about Dave:

- Integrity
- Intelligence
- Equanimity
- Dedication
- Collaboration
- Modesty
- Good judgment
- Spirituality
- Compassion

In all of the years that I have known him, I have heard from all quarters only admiration of Dave’s character, capabilities, and accomplishments. Dave never needed to seek promotion—he was always sought out to take on important and challenging roles. Over the course of 28 remarkable years, he was asked to be dean of students, secretary of the college, vice president for finance and planning, and executive vice president.

One sentence from a citation in Dave’s honor by the Allegheny College board of trustees captures the essence of your new president:
The most remarkable thing about Dave is that everything is remarkable about Dave. I fully agree!

Dave is a Renaissance man, widely read and capable of intelligently engaging a wide range of topics. He has a profound understanding of and appreciation for education, learning, and the liberal arts tradition.

Dave has a ready and genuine rapport with students and never forgets they are why we are here. He also recognizes and values alumni as both the product of and important stewards of a college.

He is a leader through example—he expects no more of others in character and performance than he expects of himself. He is a catalyst for improvement and change, and he is also open-minded and steady—a terrific combination.

Dave is a master of complex issues and systems, bringing order to potential disagreement and chaos. A highly skilled consensus builder, he elicits the thoughts and ideas of others and is able to weave disparate views into a coherent whole.

He is one of the most productive colleagues I have ever encountered, skillfully attending to daily demands while also embracing longer-range, strategic issues. Dave gracefully “gets things done”—and he gets the right things done, in the right way. Not eager to stand in the limelight himself, he readily gives credit and thanks to others.

But as we all know, a college president must often be in the limelight. After all, the president (and the president’s spouse) have been rightly called the “living logos” of a college. I can assure you that both Dave and Janice will handle their roles in a manner that will always make Coe proud.

But what about the other sides of Dave McInally?

• You won’t know the complete Dave until you have witnessed him taking on students in any number of competitive endeavors—challenge him sometime.

• You won’t know the whole Dave until you have heard him do vocals and play lead guitar on a good rock and roll tune—ask him to perform sometime.

• You won’t know all of Dave until you have seen him hanging from a ladder two stories high cleaning leaves from the gutters—please take my word for this one and try to keep him from doing it!

• Dave also enjoys sports. I am pleased that with his relocation to Cedar Rapids, he finally adds some legitimacy to being a life-long Minnesota Vikings fan. He will be even more passionate about the Kohawks.
I envy you at Coe—you now have your own opportunity to get to know Dave’s character and capabilities in all their richness.

In conclusion, let me say that Dave is an unusually gifted and principled individual who embodies the very qualities that Coe College sought in its next president. He will work tirelessly and effectively to advance Coe’s mission while infusing a sense of accomplishment and fun throughout the institution and beyond.

Dave McInally will more than deliver on the potential that the Search Committee and Board of Trustees saw in him. You were absolutely right in selecting him.

In accepting his appointment as president of Coe a few months ago, Dave pledged to give you all that he has in pursuit of an even brighter future for Coe College.

He will fulfill that pledge, and he will surely make Coe—and each of you—shine even more brightly.