

Welcome

C. William Schwab '68
Chair, Ithaca College Board of Trustees
The Inauguration of Thomas R. Rochon
Friday, April 17, 2009

Good afternoon. I'm Dr. C. William Schwab, chair of the Ithaca College Board of Trustees, and it's my great privilege to welcome you to the inauguration of Ithaca College's eighth president, Thomas R. Rochon.

I'd like to thank the members of the Ithaca College Wind Ensemble and the Ithaca College Brass Choir for the music we've been listening to. I'd also like to welcome our special guests, including local college presidents; delegates from more than 40 institutions of higher education and learned societies; local dignitaries from business and government; President Rochon's family and friends, including his lovely wife, Amber; president emerita Peggy Ryan Williams and her husband, David; and the Ithaca College faculty, staff, students, alumni, parents, friends, and trustees who are here with us today. Welcome.

I would like to first share some thoughts about why colleges and universities celebrate presidential inaugurations. The term "inauguration" has two meanings. Not only does it refer to a formal induction into office, but it can also mean, more generally, a formal beginning or introduction. Some of you are meeting President Rochon for the first time this weekend, and I hope you're as impressed by his credentials and confident of his abilities as we on the search committee were, in selecting him as Ithaca's eighth president.

Inaugurations represent important milestones in an institution's history. This is a time to reflect on our College's past and celebrate the achievements that have brought us here. Inaugurations are also a chance to come together as a community, to heal old wounds, renew old ties, and embrace a new course for the future. Inaugurations offer the chance to remember that the Ithaca College community does not consist solely of those who work here, or those who were once students here, but it also includes all those people outside of this institution who offer their support and guidance. And finally, an inauguration is the chance for a new president to mark the formal beginning of a new era and to outline a new vision for the future.

As many of you know, Thomas Rochon began his tenure last July. So why wait until now for the inauguration ceremony? As I said, this event offers a chance to outline a new vision for the future. Thomas Rochon understands that Ithaca's future must build on the achievements of the past. And so, in the early part of his tenure, he devoted himself to learning as much as possible about the College community—the faculty, staff, students, alumni, parents, friends, and trustees of Ithaca College. He not only met people on campus, but traveled throughout the country meeting alumni, parents, and friends living and working in other cities.

Knowing the strength and commitment of the IC community, President Rochon initiated a strategic visioning process that involved every College constituency in setting a new course for the institution. Today he'll unveil the vision that has come from that process, and because this new vision is from the IC community as a whole, I believe it's one we can all embrace.