

James F. Jones, Jr.

The philosopher Rousseau wrote, “Everything we do not have at our birth and which we need when we are grown is given us by education.” As a scholar, teacher, and administrator, you have dedicated your life to education and to all that it brings to the lives of young people.

Every teacher begins as a student. Your own education includes a diploma with high honors from Georgia Military Academy, a bachelor of arts with honors from the University of Virginia, a master of arts degree from Emory University, a *Certificat* from the Sorbonne, and a master of philosophy and doctoral degrees from Columbia University.

You then advanced through the faculty ranks at Washington University in Saint Louis and were promoted in record time to professor of romance languages and literatures. Your next positions were at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, where you became a professor in the humanities and commenced your administrative career in earnest, serving as vice provost of the university and dean of Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences. From there, you were chosen president of Kalamazoo College in Michigan, and in 2004, you became Trinity College’s 21st president.

During your years here, you have led numerous major initiatives. The Long Walk has been restored to its original 19th-century beauty and its buildings transformed into 21st-century living, office, and classroom spaces. Trinity Commons has been completely renovated and turned into performance and office space. Vernon Social has become a focal point of campus, the Crescent Street Townhouses provide new housing options, and the Gates Quad has transformed a campus crossroad into a welcoming, parklike landscape. And the Chapel, a building close to your heart, has undergone a number of improvements. You have worked tirelessly to improve Trinity’s fiscal outlook, including significant Annual Fund advances. You initiated the Cornerstone and Legacy campaigns, the largest philanthropic effort in Trinity’s history, which enabled the College to enhance academic excellence, increase access for students of promise, and invigorate the campus. You also added a substantial number of young scholar-teachers to the ranks of the faculty, a move that will ensure Trinity’s academic strength into the future.

You have been remarkably busy on behalf of the College, and yet you have made time to listen to the concerns of individual students, faculty, staff, parents, and alumni. You also remained close to your roots as a teacher by continuing to conduct an undergraduate seminar. You have been a concerned participant in the civic affairs of Hartford, and happily you have also been able to enjoy, support, and play the organ music that is such an important part of your life.

You place great value on traditions that tie the Trinity community together, and so you revived the historic Convocation ceremony at the opening of the school year. There, you concluded your speech to every incoming class with these lines from Apollinaire, “ ‘Come to the edge,’ he said. They said, ‘We can’t. We are afraid.’ ‘Come to the edge,’ he said. They said, ‘We can’t. We will fall.’ ‘Come to the edge,’ he said. They came, he pushed them, and they flew.” You have gently pushed a generation of students, faculty, and staff to find the courage to fly, to reach their full potential, and to go beyond what they thought possible.

For your exceptional career as teacher, scholar, and leader in the field of education, and above all for your devoted service to Trinity College, I have the honor of presenting you, James F. Jones, Jr., for the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*.

Paul E. Raether '68
Chairman
Trinity College Board of Trustees

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