I am pleased to speak tonight for the purpose of welcoming to campus President-elect Milton Moreland, his wife, Dina, and one of their two sons, Micah. Susie and I had the privilege of having the three of them for dinner last night at Craik House, and you may be sure that our conversation was informative and fun and encouraging all at once. We even slipped out in time to catch the Norton Center show, The Tap Pack, on their first evening on Centre’s campus. No doubt, they will have, just as we have had, the opportunity to witness in this very space, Newlin Hall, so many wonderful events and performances in the years ahead.

As I told the Board of Trustees when they met this past Saturday in Louisville to conduct their work and welcome Dr. Milton Moreland as Centre College’s 21st President, these are momentous days in the life of the College – ones to be celebrated and cherished all at once. And, so it is for us during these next several days, as together we have the chance to welcome the Morelands to Centre.

You should know that while I, appropriately, was not involved directly in the search process for Centre’s new president, it turns out to be my good fortune to have known Milton before his election. I know of his strong record for leadership and service at Rhodes College, and I have witnessed the way he conducts himself in important conversations about American higher education. I have found him to be fair, balanced, thoughtful, positive, creative, and courageous, as required, as a leader at Rhodes and as an academic leader in the Associated Colleges of the South and the Southern Athletic Association. The search committee has reason to be proud of the work they did to locate and, then, recruit the very best person they could find to join our community and take the College forward in all ways one might measure. That is what the very best institutions do – they take the good work that been accomplished to date and find leadership to take it to new and higher levels of achievement. That is our habit at Centre College, and I am confident that Dr. Moreland, working with the College’s trustees, faculty, staff, and students, will continue to move Centre forward in important and powerful ways.
This moment also gives me the chance to express my sincerest thanks to my partner, my teammate, Susie, as we welcome Dina Moreland to campus. She will play a key role, as Susie has in my work, in supporting Milton in the advancement of the college. And, Micah, it will be our prayer that you and your brother, Marcus, will come to love Centre College in the same way that our boys, Luke and Mark, and, now, their spouses and children – our six grandchildren – have come to love this place and its people.

And, I want to assure you, Milton and Dina, that you will find Centre’s people – its faculty, staff, students, and her legendary alumni and friends, as well as the talented people who make up the larger Danville community – to be ones you can trust and will come to admire in time. Count on them to be your partners, your teammates in advancing the cause of this place, our place, and what will become your place in new and exciting ways. I have referred to Milton Moreland as 21. It has a nice ring to it. And, with all this as a backdrop, I welcome 21 and his family to Centre by finishing my brief remarks with an Irish prayer, familiar to many of you, that captures my sincerest hope for President Moreland as he begins his work on July 1st, 2020, “May the road rise up to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face; the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again, may God hold you [and, Dina and your family and the Centre College family] in the palm of His hand.”