Good afternoon.

I’m Phil Oldham, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs, and it is my honor to welcome you to 125th Anniversary Convocation 2011.

We gather today for an age-honored tradition on college campuses, one that I am pleased to see alive on our campus. The concept of convocation in higher education dates back centuries and was primarily used to describe gatherings of clergy at a time when the church was responsible for education. Over time, campuses around the world have adopted the convocation as a gathering to address the state of the university and issues facing the academy.

One hundred and twenty five years ago, on September 15, 1886, faculty, staff, students, and community leaders gathered for the
first time in Chattanooga to celebrate Matriculation Day on this campus. In the ensuing 125 years, faculty and students have met in convocation in various settings to discuss the work of the University and its future. We now hold convocation on September 15 each year to celebrate the beginning of a new academic year and to give an annual report on the state of the University.

An anniversary offers a perfect time to reflect upon where you have been as an institution, to note how you have reached this point, and to take stock of your strengths and weaknesses as you look to the future. Certainly, we will do all of these here at UTC this year.

Education has long been recognized as a pathway to success and opportunity. From the earliest days when Chattanooga leaders were negotiating with officials of the Freedmans Society and the Methodist Episcopal Church about locating a university in the city, Chattanoogans recognized the need for more educational opportunities in the community. One leader stated the case quite simply, “We need more education more than we need more
railroads.” In a petition by the Iron, Coal and Manufacturers Association, H. Clay Evans wrote, “In nothing is Chattanooga so far behind neighboring cities as in her educational advantages, and the hearty cooperation of our people in this enterprise is most earnestly solicited.” The resulting fund-raising effort yielded more than $15,000, half of the cost of constructing Old Main.

That commitment to education as the pathway to opportunity for individuals and for society remains strong in Chattanooga today. This campus continues to benefit from passionate relationships with donors and supporters whose only connection to UTC is a love for this community and the recognition that everyone gains from a well-educated citizenry.

This belief is at the very heart of what we do and why we exist. When students and their families hear our motto—“We shall achieve”—it is the promise of greater opportunity and a brighter future that they expect.

Now, as 125 years ago, it is the responsibility of The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga to fulfill that expectation.
Represented on this stage are individuals who believe in the power of learning and are dedicated to preserving opportunity through access to education.

- Representing the Faculty is Faculty Senate President and Professor of Foreign Languages and Literatrues, Dr. Victoria Steinberg.
- Representing the students is Student Government Association President Shalin Shah.
- And those who will have a role in today’s program, are:
  - Chancellor Emeritus Dr. Frederick Obear, who holds a special place in the history of this campus as the longest serving chancellor or president and who continues to serve UTC as an ambassador, an adviser, and a friend and fundraiser;
  - The Honorable Ron Littlefield, Mayor of the City of Chattanooga;
  - our keynote speaker today, who will have a more formal introduction later, Dr. Horace Traylor; and
  - Our Chancellor, Dr. Roger Brown.
And now it is my great pleasure to introduce our chancellor Roger Brown. Under his leadership, UTC continues to grow and achieve, including record enrollment, record external grant support, and record private gift support—all measures of a vibrant, progressive campus.

Please welcome, Chancellor Roger Brown….

*(Chancellor Brown introduces Dr. Traylor)*

*Dr. Traylor’s Speech*

Dr. Traylor, thank you for those inspiring words. And now Chattanooga Mayor Ron Littlefield has a special presentation from the City of Chattanooga.
And, now Chancellor Brown and I would like to present Dr. Traylor with a few gifts on behalf of the students, faculty, staff, and alumni of UTC. This gift basket is full everything you might ever need to show your Mocs spirit. And a special gift from our Athletics Department, we are pleased to present you with this authentic Mocs Football jersey with the number 53, commemorating the year you received your first degree. Thank you for everything you have done for this campus, and these are just a few small gifts from your Alma Mater to let you know how special you are to all of us.

As we leave today, we need to remember that this is not the end of the conversation. This is the beginning. We must be vigilant to ensure that UTC always remains accessible to eligible students and we must remain committed to providing access to opportunity through education for generations of students to come.
Thank you for joining us today. Remember, you are all invited right now to attend our big birthday party in Heritage Plaza.