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Opening Remarks, delivered at Convocation on August 28, 1998

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OPENING CONVOCATION REMARKS

AUGUST 28, 1998

At opening Convocations we have had speakers from the Faculty, from several professions, different racial backgrounds, and both genders. We have never had a speaker with a southern accent so I thought we had better reach out beyond our widening clan and bring a boy from the Yankee part of Tennessee. That I thought would not be too difficult an adjustment. Though he is a son of the South, he's not deep South; and we will be able to understand him. He is a graduate of Lee College in Cleveland, Tennessee and now he is President there. I have been particularly drawn to him because our lives paths have similarities. Both of us entered our professions rather early in our careers, and we both became Presidents at a college where our fathers had preceded us in the position.

His Ph.D. in Psychology was earned at Emory University. His teaching was at the undergraduate level at Lee College and Appalachian State University. He has won an Excellence in Teaching award and has published extensively in his field. He wanders off to Harvard once in a while to study, think, and write. While doing all of this, he also built Lee College, tripling the enrollment in his twelve-year tenure. He has pretty much done it all in academia.

But he has another life. He is a free lance writer. He is the author or co-author of 20 books, sharing bylines with such personalities as Johnny Cash, pro football star Terry Bradshaw, businessman Rich DeVos and many others. Four of his books have been on the *New York Times* bestselling list and his book the Possible Dream was the #7 bestselling non-fiction book a few years ago according to *Publishers Weekly*.

For nearly two decades he and Darlia, his wife, and Nancy and I have come together on occasion and always our lives in the academy provide a bond that stimulates our conversation and nurtures our friendship. I wanted to share this excellent professor and able administrator with you and he agreed. I present to you, Dr. Charles Paul Conn, President of Lee College.