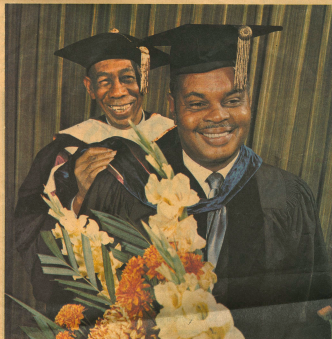




—General Photo By Dan Storer

A Symbolic 'Change of Command' at Florida A&M University Inauguration

... FAMU President B. L. Perry gets an assist with head from former president George W. Gore

A&M Inaugurates Perry

BY EARL HUCKEY

General Staff Writer

Dr. Benjamin L. Perry Jr., who has held the office for more than a year, was formally inaugurated as the sixth president of Florida A&M University yesterday as alumni, state government and education dignitaries looked on.

Approximately 2,000 guests, including Gov. Claude Kirk, FAMU President Emeritus George W. Gore, and Florida State University President J. Stanley Marshall, gathered in Lee Hall Auditorium for the inauguration of the first FAMU graduate to become its chief executive.

Highlight of the approximately two-and-a-half-hour convocation, came when

Board of Regents Vice Chairman Louis C. Murray of Orlando draped the traditional medallion, bearing the seals of Florida A&M and the State of Florida, around Dr. Perry's neck.

Murray took note of the FAMU President's unique place in the history of the university.

"It is a great step forward," the BOR vice-chairman said. "to install the university's first graduate as its president, and we can only hope that such identification will serve to inspire everyone in the university community, right down to the student body."

Murray marveled at how "in such a relatively short period of time, Florida A&M has come to play such a definite distinctive role" in Florida higher education.

In his charge to the president, Murray urged Dr. Perry to "work for the advancement of Florida A&M University's position as a true partner in our state university system of higher education."

University Chancellor Robert Maize pointed out "what a difficult position" the university president has come to occupy in American society.

"He is confronted by independent faculty, students who demand a share in decision-making, and a situation which prevents him from exercising the restraints on dissent available to leaders in other fields when they wish to achieve their will."

"In today's university," Maize contrasted, "leadership must be by persuasion and force of intellect. A president can no longer govern without the whole-hearted support of his faculty."

Speaker of the House Fred Schatz of Jacksonville flew in from a legislative weekend in Tampa to bring greetings from Florida lawmakers... and pointed to the legislature's "commitment to higher education."

"Florida A&M has a unique and special place in our higher educational system," Schatz said. "And with the inauguration of a strong president for a strong institution, I am confident that role will expand in the future."

Gov. Kirk welcomed alumni and guests "from throughout Florida and the nation," and also expressed confidence in FAMU's future.

"I knew this man, and I know this institution," the Governor said. "And I am confident both will go forward to provide the educational opportunities for future generations they will be required to serve."

Other platform guests included Rep. Don Fagan, Secretary of State Tom Adams, and representatives from other members of the state university system.

The FAMU university community also sent individual spokesmen. Newly-elected Student Government President, Oscar Davis spoke for the students, Vice President for Administration Dr. Henry E. Finley for the administration, and Dr. Elsie H. Wallace, professor of Elementary Education, for the faculty.

In his inaugural address, Dr. Perry recalled a meeting he had attended at which a wealthy Tallahassee resident had asked why "your people don't pull themselves up by their bootstraps as we did."

His goal for Florida A&M,

the president said, was to "provide both the bootstraps and the boots" for those deprived of educational and economic opportunities.