

157th Founders' Day
Dr. Lucas Script

Hello and welcome to all of you here today on Virginia Union University's 157th anniversary. I am honored and delighted to address you on this day. Virginia Union University is a conglomeration shaped by our vibrant community that consists of Board of Trustees, Alumni, Faculty, Staff, Seniors, students, and friends of VUU. Your unique contribution stands as a significant stone in the edifice that constitutes Virginia Union University. It is both the platform that brings us together and the ongoing community that we are constantly engaged in, building, and defining.

Every platform is welded together by care, investment, and the desire to insure the well-being of its members. This undertaking requires maternal commitment; it requires the love of a mother whose maternal instincts are always bent towards nurturing their offspring and I want to celebrate and honor the unflinching maternal commitment of Mrs. Mary Lumpkin as the "Mother of VUU". Mrs. Lumpkin's love stretched beyond the confines

of the biological to be maternal to the large community of Virginia Union University.

Her commitment to the university, our commitment to strive to be in tune with the inherent humanity of our community fellows, and the mission to expand the reach of Virginia Union University are proof that we are responding to the call to be Socially Responsible and Ethically Conscious. As we near Black History Month, we must refocus our collective outlook to understand that generational wealth for us as a people is the ultimate goal of this process.

Learning to view VUU beyond what we're used to requires that we embrace a new, innovative VUU—a global university. With this perspective, Virginia Union would expand to welcome a more diverse student body, those with Latino, Asian, and Native American backgrounds and anyone else who wishes to join our rich, vibrant, and distinctive community.

To our students, as the new semester approaches, it is key that you remain loyal to your intellectual, social, and human dignity and celebrate them in each member of the university. My hope is that at commencement on May 7th, you will exemplify the attitude and disposition that graduates of this university will offer to the world during their professional career and as member of the broader community.

Again, I thank you and hope that this year will be the opportunity for each of you to grow toward our ideal Virginia Union University. Thank you and may God bless you.

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- Please welcome the Chairman of our Board of Trustees, Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson – who will bring greetings
 - Followed by the Invocation by University Pastor, Rev. Angelo Chatmon
 - Then, our V-U-U Choir will lead us in the singing of Lift Every Voice and Sing.

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- Your support means so much to our students and to our beloved Virginia Union University

- We will now receive greetings from
 - The V-U-U National Alumni Association President Ms. Anjou White
 - Student Government Association President Ms. Joydan Lyons-Parker
 - S-T-V-U Theologue President Minister Erin Keyes
 - Miss V-U-U Ebone Giles
 - and Mr. V-U-U Kirk Jones
 - In that order
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(Intro of Dr. Guns)

- I have the pleasure of introducing today's speaker, Rev. Dr. John E. Guns
- He is the Dean of our Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology and the Senior Pastor of St. Paul Church of Jacksonville, Inc.
- He is described as an innovative thinker with an approachable spirit.
- With those God-given gifts, he has transformed his congregation into a faith-, Fellowship-, and fun-filled community of worshippers.
- I can tell you that he is doing the same in our S-T-V-U and alumni with his "Dean's Check-In" and "Dean's Listening Room Podcast."
- Dr. Guns is a proud alum of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology where he earned his Master of Divinity and his Doctor of Ministry degrees.
- He is the founder of Operation Save Our Sons which helps young men make positive decisions regarding the law and authority.
- After a selection by the V-U-U Choir, you will hear from this

- proud husband,
- father of three daughters,
- sought-after preacher and,
- dynamic community leader- Rev. John E. Guns