

This Sacred Work

Andrea Luxton, sixth president of Andrews, inaugurated

[Campus News](#) | Posted on October 28, 2016



(Photo by Darren Heslop)

By: Becky St. Clair

“No one does a big day like Andrews University,” said William Johnsson, former executive editor and publisher of [“Adventist Review”](#) and [“Adventist World.”](#) Johnsson presented the inaugural address at the ceremony that officially appointed [Andrea Luxton](#) as the sixth president of Andrews University. The event took place on Tuesday, October 25.

The formal ceremony began with an opening voluntary by the University’s brass ensemble, and proceeded with the processional, which included a color guard from the 15 divisions of the [General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists](#) (minus Israel, as there are currently no Israeli students attending Andrews) and student representatives from [Ruth Murdoch Elementary School](#), [Andrews Academy](#), [Griggs International Academy](#), and both undergraduate and graduate representatives of the University student body.

Several official delegates were in attendance, including Truong Quang Duoc of [Vietnam National University](#) and Robert P. Bartlett, president of [Michigan Colleges Alliance](#), who delivered official greetings and congratulations to Dr. Luxton. [Niels-Erik Andreasen](#), president

emeritus of Andrews University, was also in attendance, and officially handed over to Dr. Luxton the symbolic mace he had received at his own presidential inauguration at Andrews University on October 30, 1994.

“I really appreciated the variety of people involved in the ceremony,” says [Jeff Boyd](#), research support specialist in the [Office of Research & Creative Scholarship](#) at Andrews University. “It really demonstrated the local and international position that Andrews holds.”

Artur Stele, chair of the University’s [Board of Trustees](#) and general vice president for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, during his charge to the president, remarked, “Dr. Luxton, you are the right person for the right time, and there are all sorts of reasons to celebrate.”

Johnsson, a personal friend of President Luxton, presented the inaugural address titled, “The Andrews Six,” a colorful historical look at the six presidents who have led the flagship institution since it became Andrews University in 1960.

Quoting [Hebrews 12:1–3](#) from The Message, Johnsson read, “All these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on, means we’d better get on with it. Strip down, start running and never quit. No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we’re in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along then way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now he’s there, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls!”

He concluded with a personal message to Andrea Luxton: “Our prayers and best wishes go with you as you run your race as president of Andrews University.”

Throughout the ceremony the congregation was attentive, cheerful and reverent.

“The presidential inauguration of Dr. Andrea Luxton was poignant and memorable in so many ways,” remarks [Carole Woolford-Hunt](#), chair of the Andrews University [Department of Graduate Psychology & Counseling](#). “I was struck by the peaceful transfer of power from Dr. Andreasen (president emeritus) to Dr. Luxton (the first female president of Andrews University). It was a dignified and joyous program that was a model for the church and country. I left the program feeling filled with hope for a bright future.”

[Dwight K. Nelson](#), lead pastor for [Pioneer Memorial Church](#) on the campus of Andrews University, delivered the prayer of dedication.

“What does the Lord require of you, Andrea?” he said during his prayer. “To act justly, love mercy and walk humbly, and lead us to do the same.”

[Heather Ferguson](#), chair of the [Department of Speech-Language Pathology & Audiology](#), commented, “The inauguration marked the commencement of a new and exciting time for Andrews University. I have great respect for President Luxton and I believe that her vision and support of the creativity of her faculty and staff will lead the university in doing great things for the community at large.”

In her brief response at the conclusion of the inaugural ceremony, Luxton continued with the story theme she established at the start of her role as president, which began July 1, 2016.

“What does a story do?” she asked. “It deepens our experience. It’s the synergy of what happens when our stories come together. We now need to share a commitment to this journey ahead, and that we will also sometimes stop, take time and make sure that we listen to the still small voice of God. I hope my commitment is in line that of everyone part of the story of Andrews. Thank you for inviting me to be one of the authors.”

The concept of the [Andrews Story](#) was a running theme throughout the inaugural ceremony.

[Jiri Moskala](#), dean of the [Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary](#), said, “Dr. Luxton’s transformative leadership style was powerfully reflected in her response to the charge she received from the Church by stressing her willingness to learn and make AU a warm welcoming place even more than now. Her goal is to be a spiritual leader with strong Adventist identity to make a difference for the whole campus and activities here and around the world. Her spiritual leadership is personal, contagious, innovative, humble and creative.”

“I have been impressed over the past year how smoothly the transition to President Luxton has taken place,” comments Terry Robertson, associate dean of [libraries](#) at Andrews University. “The inauguration today put a strong exclamation mark on that process. The program was inspiring, encouraging, motivating. I especially appreciated Dr. Luxton’s response toward the end of the program, and look forward to her leadership, sharing the story of Andrews University.”

Following the benediction by [R. Clifford Jones](#), president of the [Lake Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventists](#), the entire congregation recited the J.N. Andrews Benediction, quoted from a letter [J.N. Andrews](#) wrote dated September 15, 1874:

“And now, as we set forth, we commit ourselves to the merciful protection of God, and we especially ask the prayers of the people of God that his blessing may attend us in this sacred work.”

Related Links

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- [What's an inauguration?](#)

- [Who was J.N. Andrews?](#)
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