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INAUGURATION from cover

presented the chain of office, then President Emeritus John Lahey presented the founding documents. Chairman of the Board of Trustees Chuck Saia followed the presentations with the introduction of the president.

Saia recalled his time leading the search committee for the new president and the first time he met Hardin — noting that it was clear Hardin was the one to lead Quinnipiac.

Sitting front row was Hardin's family as well as her dog, Tator — named after cofounder of Quinnipiac Samuel W. Tator — who was dressed in a cap and gown too.

In her inaugural address, Hardin reflected on her upbringing in the suburbs of Houston, as the daughter of two hardworking parents.

"My parents, like so many of you with your own children, taught us to take every opportunity, to learn, to stand firm when our values were tested, to set our sights high and to find places where we could help lift others higher," Hardin said.

Looking directly at her mom from the stage, Hardin shared gratitude for all she has done for her.

"To my mom, who's here today, I have to say this just 107 days into this role at Quinnipiac University, you will be glad to know that this Texan has found that place," Hardin said.

Hardin discussed the importance of grit and how it intertwines with Quinnipiac's commitment to ambition — drawing from Quinnipiac's history of beginning with 11 students in 1929 to where the university is now.

"Grit means being driven by purpose and fueled by ambition," Hardin said in the words of American academic and psychologist Angela Duckworth. "Now the purpose of this great university is clear, transforming the lives of every learner who joins this community, helping them to learn how to think, how to discern, how to collaborate and how to succeed."

As Hardin embodies ambition, she also noted two strivers in the Bobcat community during her address — Saia and men's basketball senior forward Amarri Monroe, welcoming him to stand for recognition during the ceremony. Both of which found their place at Quinnipiac.

Hardin shared a quote from Monroe.

"I know how it feels to be forgotten. Three or four years ago, I was forgotten. Nobody wanted me coming here. They made me feel like family, and this will always be family to me." That striver now, is the Conference Player of the Year in men's basketball," Hardin said.

Immediately following the ceremony, attendees filed into the Rocky Top Student Center to celebrate the inauguration with conversation, greetings and buffet-style food.

"I was overwhelmed and just felt really grateful to be able to look up when I got seated and see so many people who had taken the time to meet me, and had taken the moments to welcome me to the community and then to see them there, was really touching," Hardin said.

Hardin noted that she didn't have nervous feelings prior to the ceremony, but rather curiosity for what the day would look like.

Reflecting on the ceremony, Annalisa Zinn, vice president for Academic Innovation and Effectiveness, noted the sense of community seen at both the ceremony and within Hardin's leadership.

"I thought it was so amazing to see the community united," Zinn said. "Just like President Hardin was saying that she really wants the community to unite around our mission"

and purpose and our values, but to feel that immediately was really, really powerful. And also, when she talked about the dreams for the university and for the dreams of our students, that we really believe in our education, we believe that it can transform lives. And it was really beautiful that we were united among that purpose."

Liebowitz echoed this sentiment.

"It's a real privilege, honestly, to be in a moment where we get to bring all parts of the Quinnipiac community together in celebration of our past and excitement about the future, and I think Marie really embodies both of those things," Liebowitz said. "She's going to be the right president for the right moment, and I'm thrilled to have her on the journey."

Like Zinn and Liebowitz, Hardin highlighted the sense of community — something she has found in her first few months at Quinnipiac.

"What I've learned is that this institution has a kind of community cohesion that is truly remarkable for its size," Hardin said. "It's not a tiny place. So to have the kind of community ethos it has at the size it is tells you there's something really special about Quinnipiac."



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