



Inauguration of
JAY BYERS, J.D.
25th President of Simpson College

OCTOBER 11, 2024

Inauguration



Take the Future By Storm

The Inauguration of
Jay Byers, J.D.
as the 25th President of Simpson College

Friday, October 11, 2024
At two o'clock in the afternoon

Simpson College
Smith Chapel
Indianola, Iowa

Reception to follow the ceremony in the Black Box Theatre in Kent Campus Center

Jay Byers, J.D. was named Simpson College's 25th president in May 2023. In his first year as president, Simpson's first year student enrollment grew to its largest number in more than a decade, first year student retention increased five percent, and the Dunn Library renovation was completed.

Prior to becoming Simpson's president, Byers excelled in his 18 years of executive leadership with the Greater Des Moines Partnership, including 11 years as president and CEO. Under his leadership, The Partnership experienced significant growth, expanding to represent 11 counties and 24 Affiliate Chambers of Commerce with more than 6,500 members, making The Partnership the fourth largest regional chamber of commerce in the country. During his tenure, the DSM region was the fastest-growing major metro in the Midwest in percentage of population, GDP and job growth, and received countless rankings and accolades.

Byers served as The Partnership's senior vice president of Government Relations and Public Policy before serving as president & CEO. Prior to his tenure at The Partnership, he worked as district director for Iowa Congressman Leonard Boswell and as an attorney at the Ice Miller Law Firm in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Byers also served as an adjunct professor in the political science department at Simpson for several years. He also served on the Simpson College board of trustees for 11 years, prior to becoming president.

A 1993 graduate of Simpson College, Byers earned his juris doctor from the University of Iowa College of Law in 1996. He is a Certified Chamber Executive (CCE) and a graduate of the Harvard Seminar for New Presidents, U.S. Chamber's Institute of Organization Management (IOM), the OU Economic Development Institute, ACCE's Ford Foundation Regionalism and Sustainable Development Fellowship, Leadership Iowa and Warren County Leadership Institute.

Byers currently serves on multiple boards of directors, including the American Rivers Conference Executive Committee, Indianola Chamber of Commerce, Warren Count Economic Development Corporation, Iowa Economic Development Authority, Capital Crossroads Regional Council and ChildServe.

During his tenure at The Partnership, Byers chaired the Iowa Chamber Alliance at the statewide level, chaired the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) and served on the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Committee of 100 at the national level, and was the U.S. representative on the International Chamber of Commerce World Chambers Federation General Council.

He also previously served on the boards of the Alpha Tau Omega National Fraternity, Blank Park Zoo Foundation, Indianola Parks and Recreation Commission, the Warren County Leadership Institute, Catch Des Moines, Iowa Young Presidents Organization, Iowa Healthiest State Initiative and Balance Autism.

Byers has received numerous accolades and honors, including: #2 Most Influential Business Leader by the Des Moines Business Record (2019-23); Des Moines Business Record Forty Under 40 (2006); ACCE Forty Under Forty Rising Stars of the Chamber World (2009); Des Moines Business Record Forty Under 40 Alum of the Year (2012); Catch Des Moines Community Champion Award (2014); Simpson College Alumni Achievement Award (2015); ACCE Chairman's Award (2020); Iowa Character Champion Award (2023); and ACCE Life Member Award (2024).

Byers has been married to his wife, Katie, for 26 years. Katie currently serves as director of the Iowa Center Women's Business Center, founder and CEO of HomeDitty, and is an artist at Mainframe Studios in Downtown Des Moines. Jay and Katie have two daughters, Sophie and Charolotte. Sophie is currently attending DMACC studying animation, and Charlotte is studying fashion design at Savannah College of Art Design.

Inaugural Program

Prelude

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore thee - arr. Paul Manz
Sohee Lee

Organist

Procession

Order of Procession

Flag Bearers

Ilianna Murphy '25
Grant Love '26

Student Body Vice President
Junior Class President

Grand Marshal

Terry Handley '09

Board Chair

Medallion Bearer

Dr. John Epperson

Professor of Political Science Emeritus

The Simpson College Choir and Chamber singers

Simpson College Trustees

Simpson College Faculty

Simpson College Administrators

Delegates

Greeters

Processional in D

Organist

Welcome

Terry Handley

Chair, Board of Trustees

Invocation

The Reverend Mara Bailey '06

Chaplain, Simpson College

Invocation Response

Sull'aria...che soave zeffiretto" from The Marriage of Figaro
by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Performed by:

Meghan Kasanders '14

Kaylah Hicok '18

Allen Perriello

Soprano
Soprano
Pianist (DMMO staff)

Greetings

The Board of Trustees

Terry Handley

Chair, Board of Trustees

Iowa Conference United Methodist Church

Katie Dawson '06

Assistant to the Bishop

The Faculty

Aswati Subramanian

Associate Professor of Biology

The Students

Sarah Roberts '25

Student Body President

The Alumni

Martha Davis-Goldstein '08

Simpson College Alumni Association

Indianola Chamber of Commerce

Amanda Zwanziger

President and CEO

Iowa Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

Gary Steinke

President

Spoken Word

Billy Weathers '13

Founder and CEO, B.Well Foundation

Choral Anthem

Bridge Over Troubled Water – Paul Simon, arr. Kirby Shaw

Simpson College Choir

Dr. Jon Arnold

Conductor

Dr. Jin Young Park

Pianist

The Investiture of the President

Terry Handley

Chair, Board of Trustees

Introduction of Jay Byers

David Hayes

President, Coe College

President's Response

Jay Byers '93

President

Homeward Bound

Singing of the Red and Gold (lyrics listed on the back)

Homeward Bound
Chamber Singers and Choir

Benediction

Pastor Brian Williams '15

Indianola First United Methodist Church

The Lords Prayer Piano Solo

Recorded in 1952

Joyce Jensen Byers (1941-1979)

Resessional

Postlude

Fanfare - Lemmens

Sohee Lee

Organist

Simpson College Board of Trustees

Nick Andersen '99

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Resident Bishop, Iowa Conference
Des Moines, Iowa

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Des Moines, Iowa

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Executive Vice President Iowa Association
of Business and Industry
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Martha Davis-Goldstein '08

Community Impact Coordinator
Chicken N Pickle

D. Robert Downing '63

Downing Construction (retired)
Indianola, Iowa

Rick W. Exline '78

Executive Vice President/Senior Managing Director
of Life Plan Communities (retired)
Indianapolis, Indiana

Steven C. Fiterman '68

President Ground Development, Inc.
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Rear Admiral, USN (retired)
Bokeelia, Florida

Denise M. Griffey '79

Director of Early College, Community Outreach,
and STEM Initiatives (retired)
Lenexa, Kansas

Kevin Halterman

President/CEO People's Bank
Indianola, Iowa

Terry W. Handley '09

President and Chief Executive Officer
Casey's General Stores (retired)
Bondurant, Iowa

Kamie Downing Haynes '92

Owner Lula Belle
Indianola, Iowa

Laura Howe '06

Regional Banking Director Wells Fargo
Norwalk, Iowa

Steven G. Johnson '81

President/Chief Executive Officer Careview Communications
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Truro, Iowa

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Polk County Administrator
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Des Moines, Iowa

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VP for Affiliate Relations SAS Institution
Grimes, Iowa

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Senior Vice President UBS Financial Services
Des Moines, Iowa

Deanna Strable-Soethout

President and Chief Financial Officer
Principal Financial Group
Urbandale, Iowa

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Town and Country, Missouri

Brian Williams '15

Pastor
Indianola First United Methodist Church

Maribeth Wright '87

Executive Director Iowa Higher Education
Loan Authority
Norwalk, Iowa

Honorary Life Trustees

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West Des Moines, Iowa

Presidents of Simpson

Samuel Milton Vernon 1866-1868

Alexander Burns 1868-1878

Thomas Stribling Berry 1878-1880

Edward Lamay Parks 1880-1886

William Ennis Hamilton 1887-1889

Edmund Meek Holes 1889-1892

Fletcher Brown 1892-1898

Joseph Benson Harris 1898-1899

Charles Eldred Shelton 1899-1910

Francis L. Strickland 1910-1915

James Watson Campbell 1916-1919

John Linnaeus Hillman 1919-1936

Earl E. Harper 1936-1938

John Owen gross 1938-1941

Edwin Edgar Voigt 1942-1952

William Edward Kerstetter 1953-1963

Ralph Candler John 1963-1972

Richard Bailey Lancaster 1972-1979

Robert Edward McBride 1979-1987

Stephen Grant Jennings 1987-1998

Roger Kevin LaGree 1999-2005

John Warren Bird 2005-2013

Jay Keith Simmons 2013-2019

Marsha C. Kelliher 2020-2023

Jay Byers 2023 – Present

Acting Presidents

William Ennis Hamilton February- March 1868

William Ennis Hamilton 1886-1887

William Ennis Hamilton 1915-1916

Adm. Committee: Francis Moats, Clyde Emmons, Rae Dean July-November 1938

Adm. Committee: Forrest Brown, chairman 1941-1942

Hurford Stone April-November 1953

M. Bruce Haddox 1998-1999

Robert J. Lane January-May 2020

The Red and Gold

Come we will sing together
Once more the ringing song,
A strain that the coming classes
Unceasingly shall prolong.
The praise of our Alma Mater
Dear Simpson will e'er be told
We'll cherish thy recollections
And swear by the Red and Gold.

Though in the years before us,
Life's skies grow dull and gray,
The friends of our youth are scattered,
We journey our lonely way;
Sweet memories oft will linger
Of those dear days of old,
When beneath the whisp'ring maples,
We flaunted the Red and Gold.



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Sponsorship Acknowledgements

Simpson College is grateful to the following sponsors for their generous support of Inauguration and Homecoming activities

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