

I thank God for the opportunity to be here tonight. For with Him, all things are possible. I also want to thank Him for the opportunity to serve this great tribe as chairman.

Being elected Lumbee Tribal Chairman is such an amazing honor. Growing up **meager**, the son of a local Baptist minister, I never imagined God would one day allow me the honor to lead my people in such a prominent position.

I am truly humbled.

And, it is with great pleasure that I accept this noble position. It is a responsibility that I take seriously, and one that I will pour my heart and soul into **because it concerns you.**

We all have a history, all of us together, supporting similar causes. We have a wonderful history documented and all of us can share countless stories about how our individual family members stood up for a cause. We are all now bridging another piece of history and we need to set the right course to achieve it.

I would not be here without the help of God and so many other dedicated individuals. I want to take this time to thank my committee **and others throughout the tribal territory for their unwavering support.**

It is clear that the tribe could not have obtained its great successes without the dedicated work of the tribal staff, the unparalleled support received from the Lumbee Tribal Council and the wisdom of our outgoing Tribal Chairman Jimmy Goins.

I thank you all.

And, it is with honor that I accept the awesome responsibility of leading the Lumbee people, for you are the greatest people I know. God has truly blessed us through the years and I thank Him for His continued blessings.

It is with no reservations that I give you my commitment and dedication in providing the tribe with a leadership legacy to be proud of.

During my administration, I plan to address issues that are too fundamental to be left **unchallenged.** There are deep-seated issues that need to be addressed, like better care for our elders, education and development of our youth, fair and equitable housing, and full federal recognition for our people. **As you know, we have a place in Lumbee Recognition, we are building a strategy to meet the challenges of Economic Development which is so very important in our time of history, it's a time to rebuild the infrastructure of the market place, by creating our own to support and employ our Lumbee Nation.**

It is time we get our leaders in Washington, D.C. to recognize the great wrong being done to our people and correct that. **In 1931 Reverend W.L. Moore's obituary stated that he worked when there seemed to be no help. We must have this same work ethic about Federal Recognition as did a distinguished ancestor have about implementing a greater opportunity for education. It is this relentless mentality**

that has put many of our renowned leaders in their authorized positions and will place this great tribe in the forefront of justice and opportunity.

We also have to educate ourselves and others about who we are as people. We need to promote our rich history and culture as a sense of pride among our people. We are the largest tribe east of the Mississippi – some of God’s most prominent people – and we need to let other people know who we are.

We have a lot of work to do and little time to do it. We must not fixate on what’s wrong, but how to fix it. I am confident we have enough talented people to make it happen.

Unity among us is crucial. We have to stand as one in order to move forward as a tribe. We must not let any differences hinder us from being united as a tribe as we move forward.

Unity is what brought our people through tough times centuries ago when they were being ravaged by European diseases and gun powder.

Unity is what brought our people through the struggles of Indian Removal in the 1830s and the Civil War in the 1860s.

Unity is what brought our people together to start a system of education for our children in the 1880s. This education system that evolved into the University of North Carolina at Pembroke is a testament to the determination of people who wanted betterment for their children.

Unity from great Lumbee leaders like Oscar Sampson, W.L. Moore, Dr. English Jones and others brought us a great education system that helped bring about our first-class leaders of today. And, now our tribe has much to be proud of.

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United we can make a difference. The Lumbee Tribe has produced some of the most talented, intelligent and dedicated indigenous people in our nation’s history.

*****Our soldiers have fought gallantly in every major U.S. war and paid the ultimate sacrifice. I lost a brother in World War II and many others have suffered losses as well, but we have always found the strength as people to move on.**

We have produced hundreds of doctors, lawyers, educators, military leaders and professional workers who have made a difference. We are truly blessed to have such immensely successful tribal members.

As we move forward, I will need the influence of each of you in a unified effort to make tomorrow a better day for our children’s children. The future of our children is what we are working so hard for.

As a proud grandfather and great grandfather, I am so pleased to be able to serve you as Tribal Chairman of an outstanding group of people.

I am grateful to my supporters for their belief in me. Their belief has empowered me to be here today and accept the new position as your tribal leader.

Let me assure you that my leadership will be guided by no other principles than those of the Bible and the Constitution. I pledge my unwavering dedication and commitment to you as chairman of the great Lumbee Tribe.

And, as part of my unwavering dedication and commitment to you, I feel it more than appropriate to leave you with this...

PAUSE

Lord, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have delightful inheritance. I will praise the Lord who counsels me even at night my heart instructs me. I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, ***I will not be shaken.*** Psalm 16:5-8

Thank you and enjoy the rest of the evening...