

**Welcome by Dr. Esther Barazzone
Incoming Undergraduate Students
August 25, 2007**

**On behalf of the Board of Trustees the alumnae,
and the current of Chatham University community-
faculty, students, and staff- it is my great pleasure to
welcome the incoming First Year and Transfer students
to the Chatham, Pittsburgh's oldest private college and
newest university. You are indeed a talented and
special group of women. We are all excited about your
arrival.**

**Welcome also to the parents, family members and
friends who are with us this afternoon. Congratulations
for having done such a great job so far with these
wonderful young women and thanks for supporting their
decision to pursue the next phase of their education at**

Chatham College. We are honored to have you all as part of the Chatham community.

I want to make just a few my remarks this afternoon to share just a little of what we would like you to think about—students, but as well as families as you begin your collegiate journey today.

You have come to a relatively small campus. That's obvious. But our "community" is quite large. It consists of students, faculty, staff, and nearly 9000 alumnae. So there are around 10,000 people we can name who share some common values and traditions that make Chatham such a special place. You'll learn about more of those common values and traditions in the days ahead. Right now I'd like to talk about just two of the values that help define our community and should help guide you while you are here.

First is our commitment to your growth and development as women. Tomorrow, August 26th, is National Women’s Equality Day – the anniversary of the passage in 1920 of the 19th Amendment giving American women the right to vote. We were founded more than 50 years before women won the vote in 1869 as the Pennsylvania College for Females. We were founded to provide women with an education comparable to that which men could receive at the time, at as it was said, “colleges of the first class”. Our students participated actively in the women’s suffrage movement from the College’s earliest days. Chatham students also helped found the Pittsburgh YWCA, along with Frances Willard, who taught here.

Then of course, there was Rachel Carson, Class of 1929, founder of the global environmental movement—

another Chatham woman who influenced one of the most important issues of her, and our, time.

Chatham women have lead for women and for society at large in many ways. The institution is part of a world wide movement for opportunity for women. That is a touchstone for your education here. Think of yourselves as becoming and helping other women become, strong, whole and contributing. And I might add, with out clichés or presumptions as to what this means: you should want to explore while you are here what it means to be a woman, with or without a family, with or without a career. These are all important parts of your identity that we will give you many opportunities to think about. We, as an institution, are committed to your growth as a women and as an individual.

The second point I want to make is also about the intellectual ethic of the institution. You are now at a place that along with other institutions of higher education refers to itself as part of “The Academy” and tells about the “Values of the Academy.” What does that mean? I hope you will come to know deeply and intuitively over the next years here what that means. But let me just suggest a little bit now. First, “The Academy” was a garden outside of Athens where Plato taught and thought out loud, as he explored the “great issues” with his students. It remains as a paradigmatic example of deep intellectual engagement on the part of both students and faculty that the Academy should stand for. We at Chatham are committed to issues and learning in ways just as important as those of ancient Athens, and yes, you too are in a garden. But, “the Academy” means more than just a place of engaged learning. It also indicates a set of values that we as an

institution embrace, a body of beliefs, a way of living and being, to which we are deeply committed.

I want to ask each of you to spend a little time thinking, and hope maybe the faculty could spend a little time discussing with you in class, what ARE the “Values of the Academy” that should guide your conduct here—the “rules of engagement”. In my mind the rules of the Academy boil down to one simple rule: taking responsibility for one’s self. And responsibility never refers to living alone—it refers also to what others around you have a right to expect.

Responsibility for one’s self means lots of different things, among them that you do your own work. It is the expectation, among the Honor Code has a real meaning in terms of your other things that you only submit work which is done by yourself. It is, after all, your own

learning at stake. But in committing to your own learning and growth you should also commit to helping provide the same opportunity for others.

You have a responsibility to help create a healthy learning environment for everyone, and observing the Honor Code is only one way to do so. For the Academy to work as a place where people come to grow, learn as individuals, and create new ideas, it must have the ethic that all will have the same chance to learn and be individual. For the “Academy” to work as a rare and protected place in society, there are a few rules:

- 1. Open your own mind as wide as possible to listen to, and hear, the views of others. You may find those other views repugnant, or you may agree. But by listening you will learn, at a minimum, about your own views!**

2. Always defend other's right to express his or her views, as you should have the right to express yours. (I and some other U.S. university presidents have recently been unhappy with a group of British universities for threatening to boycott Israeli academics and bar them from speaking on their campus, simply because of distaste for the politics of the Israeli government. Such boycotting is deeply against the value of free speech and learning by the open exchange of ideas is a value at the heart of the Academy.

3. Civility in discourse must always, always, prevail. That means that people have the right to speak their views and be politely received. It also means that their speech should be responsible, grounded

in reason and fact. You should be aware of the impact of your words on the community.

As a member of the Academy, people at Chatham University will be a part of and engage with the issues of the day; there are issues today as important as suffrage was in 1920. On those and other issues, there must be open discussion differences of opinion and differences among people, and there must be a passionate commitment to the rights of all to have and express their views. We are here, above all to learn, and in learning and thinking, to create and shape the future.

It is a wonderful journey you are taking now to learn to exercise more and more responsibility for yourselves, for your society, for the world. We are so very happy to be taking it with you. Congratulations, and welcome to Chatham University's Chatham College for Women, and

**to a garden in Pittsburgh committed to the values of the
Academy.**