

## **STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY ADDRESS**

### **“145 Years of Challenge Opportunities”**

**Karen M. Whitney**

**September 10, 2012**

Welcome to our third celebration of Founders Day and our second State of the University address. Welcome, students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends of Clarion University.

I want to begin with this wonderful video that was first shown at our 2012 Student Convocation. [Show video.]

Before I can begin to talk about the current state of the university, I believe we have to look at our history as the video suggests.

The state of Clarion University includes its past, present, and future.

September 10, 1867, is the date of the founding of Carrier Seminary, which has evolved over the last 145 years into today's Clarion University of Pennsylvania.

It is most appropriate that we celebrate the courage and conviction that inspired the founding of this great university 145 years ago. As we move forward in continued service to the Commonwealth and to northwestern Pennsylvania, considering our past will help us continue to define our future.

In 1865 the Erie Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was informed of the merits of establishing seminaries to further the endeavors of the church and appropriately observe its centennial. In March 1866, a convention was held in Clarion to initiate the establishment of a seminary. By July, funds had been raised to construct a building. On March 18, 1867, the contributors met to organize a board of trustees.

The institution began operation on September 10, 1867 – just two years after the conclusion of the Civil War – as the Carrier Seminary of Western Pennsylvania. It was named in honor of Darius Carrier for the Carrier family contribution of what was believed to be \$10,000 and lumber for construction of a new building named Seminary Hall.

Financial difficulties and declining enrollment led to the sale of Carrier Seminary to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1886, and it was rechristened “Clarion Normal School,” one of several teacher training institutions across Pennsylvania. In 1929, it became Clarion State Teachers College, Clarion State College in 1960, and, with the

establishment of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education in 1983, the institution became Clarion University of Pennsylvania.

These were all extraordinary moments of great challenges and great opportunities.

Today, it is with complete confidence and sureness that I say to you today that the state of our university is defined by what I will call “challenge-opportunities.”

Challenge-opportunities are those major moments that can be both daunting and redefining.

Let me know continue to walk you through this presentation in ways that further illustrate what I am referring to as our state of challenge-opportunities.

[Continue PowerPoint.]

Thank you for all that you do for our students and our community.

Have an eagletastic Founders Day!