

PRESIDENTIAL
INAUGURATION

OF THE

SIXTEENTH PRESIDENT

We welcome you to the

Presidential Inauguration

of

Dr. John F. Dolan

Sixteenth President

of

Elmira College

November Sixth
Two Thousand Twenty-Six
One O'Clock in the Afternoon

Gibson Theatre, Emerson Hall
Elmira College

Reception immediately following in Cowles Hall Rotunda.

Order of Exercises

The Inauguration of Dr. John F. Dolan

Prelude and Processional

The Four Seasons: Spring — Antonio Vivaldi
The Four Seasons: Autumn

Academic Procession

The audience should rise and remain standing through the National Anthem.

Faculty Marshal
Senior Administrator Representative
Delegates of Collegiate Institutions and Learned Societies
Faculty
Administrative Representatives
Senior Officers
Trustees
Distinguished Guests
President of the College

Invocation

The Most Reverend John S. Bonnici, S.T.L., S.T.D.,
Tenth Bishop of Rochester

National Anthem

The Star-Spangled Banner — Elmira College Choir
The audience is invited to sing along.

Welcome

Dr. Charles Mitchell, Professor of American Studies

Greetings

From Administration
Patrick Gillette, MS '15
Director of Admissions
Class of 2030 Patron Saint

From the Students
Reilly Stedge '27
President, Student Association

From the Alumni
Richard Kozan '95
President, Alumni Board

From the Elmira College Board of Trustees
Clare van den Blink MSEd '96
Vice Chair, Board of Trustees

Proclamations

The Honorable Thomas F. O'Mara
New York State Senate

The Honorable Daniel J. Mandell
Mayor, City of Elmira, New York

Keynote Address

Mila H. Meier, EdD
Member, Board of Trustees
Elmira College First Lady, 1987-2012

Investiture

George H. Winner, Jr., Esquire
Chair, Board of Trustees

Inaugural Address

John F. Dolan, EdD, President

Elmira College Alma Mater — Elmira College Choir

The audience standing. The audience is invited to sing along.

Benediction

The audience standing.

Pastor Jeff Seeley, PhD, Elmira College

Recessional

La Réjouissance — George Frideric Handel
Music for the Royal Fireworks

John F. Dolan, EdD

Dr. John F. Dolan, the 16th President of Elmira College, has dedicated his career to expanding educational opportunities and helping students succeed. From his early days as a science teacher at Chaminade College Prep in St. Louis, Missouri, to his Elmira College appointment, Dolan has been known as a student-centered leader whose primary focus is on empowering students, ensuring equitable access to opportunities, and fostering an environment where every student can thrive academically, socially, and personally.

Throughout his career, Dolan has championed institutions that prioritize student success, degree completion, and personal growth. His commitment to educational opportunity is rooted in the values instilled by his family.

"I was one of nine children. While in grade school my father passed away, suddenly. My mother raised her children as a single parent who valued education above all else," Dolan shares. "We had limited resources, so the Dolan children appreciated both accessibility and affordability. And those same children went on to live productive and successful lives as a result of mom's belief in finding opportunities for her children."

Most recently Dolan was Head of School for St. Mary's Lynn, where he led historic growth in both enrollment and fundraising results. The school grew from 600 students in 2018 to over 900 students in 2026. Latino enrollment increased from 4% to 35% of the student population. His leadership earned recognition from the University of Notre Dame's Latino Engagement Institute for his work in expanding access to affordable educational opportunities. Dolan also was recognized by former Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker for his impact on education, which led to Dolan's appointment to the Massachusetts STEM Advisory Council.

Prior to St. Mary's, Dolan served as Senior Vice President for Enrollment and Athletics at Simmons College, after being selected in their 2014 national search to lead efforts for the all-women's college. He began his academic career as Dean of Admissions at Benedictine College and went on to serve The Catholic University of America, the University of Denver, and Drexel University in senior-level cabinet positions. Throughout his career, he has advised colleges and universities across the country on enrollment strategy and institutional planning.

A graduate of Benedictine College, Dolan holds a master's degree from the University of Denver and a doctorate in education from Drexel University. He and his wife, Marilyn, have four children and five grandchildren.

As president, Dolan brings a deep commitment to student success and a forward-looking vision for the institution's future. His guiding philosophy, "Forward, always forward,"reflects the spirit with which he embraces Elmira College's next chapter.

Presidents of Elmira College

2026-	Dr. John Francis Dolan
2017-2026	Dr. Charles Wharton Lindsay
2015-2018	Dr. Norman Smith
2012-2015	Dr. Ronald Oscar Champagne
1987-2012	Dr. Thomas Keith Meier
1976-1987	Rev. Dr. Leonard Tydings Grant
1954-1976	Dr. John Ralph Murray
1949-1954	Dr. Lewis Eldred
1935-1949	Dr. William Sumner Appleton Pott
1918-1935	Dr. Frederick Lent
1915-1918	Dr. John Balcom Shaw
1897-1915	Rev. Dr. Alexander Cameron MacKenzie
1893-1896	Rev. Dr. Rufus Smith Green
1889-1893	Rev. Dr. Charles Van Norden
1889	Rev. Dr. Wilson Phraner
1856-1889	Rev. Dr. Augustus Woodruff Cowles

The Board of Trustees

George H. Winner, Jr., Chair
Clare Cantrill van den Blink MSEd ’96, Vice Chair
John M. Walsh, III, Treasurer
Doris Fischer Malesardi ’64, LHD ’17, Secretary

John H. Brand
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Dale McKim
Mila Hillard Meier, PhD
Patricia Norton ’68
Jacob Porter ’04, PhD
Whitney Techet Posillico ’63
Millicent K. Ruffin, PhD
Jeffrey Streeter
Charles A. Thorley ’02
G. Thomas Tranter ’76
Jay Wolkoff ’93

Trustee Emeriti
Thomas J. Hilfiger
Katherine Heasly Metzger ’67
William Waldorf LHD ’17

Academic Mace

Dr. Charles Mitchell, Professor of American Studies

Simeon Benjamin’s Walking Stick

Patrick Gillette, MS ’15, Director of Admissions, Class of 2030 Patron Saint

Elmira College Choir

Angelina Addison ’28
Gabrielle Begley ’28
Jenica Benneaser ’29
Madison Granger ’30
Amanda Holland ’03
Dionte James ’27
Braden McKown ’28
Dale Seeley, Instructor
Dr. Jeffery Seeley, Instructor
Dawn Marullo Steever ’03

Under the direction of Patrick Gillette MS ’15

Ushers

Preston Chapman
Lauryn Engle
Collin Hetherington
Briley Lawson
Billy McCrae
Thad Phillips
Savannah Terry ’21
Malorie Stockwell ’08

Elmira College History and Traditions

Elmira College was the first institution of higher learning in America founded to award baccalaureate degrees to women with a course of study comparable to contemporary men's colleges. For this reason, Elmira is characterized in most histories of higher education as "the mother of women's colleges." The leader of the founding Trustees, Simeon Benjamin, was noted for his idealism, his perseverance, and his generosity, and his name figures prominently on the Elmira campus, kept alive to this day in traditional College songs sung by students. Benjamin, often called "The Founder," was instrumental in the selection of the College's first President, Dr. Augustus Woodruff Cowles, for whom the College's original building was subsequently named.

Long noted for the quality of its academic and student life, Elmira College was one of the first women's colleges to be awarded a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa in 1940, and the Elmira College Chapter won the Triennial Award for the most outstanding liberal arts chapter in America in 2006. Additionally, Elmira College has chapters in fifteen other national, academic honor societies. Although undergraduate liberal arts education in a residential setting has always been its core emphasis, Elmira developed professional programs in health sciences, education and business, and began awarding the Master's degree as early as 1885. The College also began offering evening courses to men and women as early as 1922.

The architectural tone of the campus is established by the Romanesque Cowles Hall and its smaller companion, Gillett Memorial Hall, along with two English Collegiate Gothic structures, Tompkins Hall and Hamilton Hall, which have been cited among the finest examples of that style in America. Carnegie Hall was the gift of Andrew Carnegie in 1911. Eight Elmira College buildings are listed in the National Register of Historic places.

Elmira College has a long tradition of international study, especially through the College's own travel-study programs and the presence of international students on campus. The distinctive academic calendar allows for faculty and students to participate in innovative projects during Term III, an intensive five-week Spring Term. In 1969, the College became coeducational, as did many other men's and women's colleges at the time. Elmira has 18 distinguished intercollegiate athletics programs.

The Elmira College legacy includes a strong and enduring foundation of traditions that continue to thrive on Campus. Elmira College has retained the tradition of freshman beanies and encourages new students to learn the College songs and participate in customs such as Mountain Day, "Patron Saints," and the Holiday Banquet. Candlelight ceremonies both welcome new students and end their baccalaureate experience on the night before Commencement. The official colors of Elmira College, purple and gold, were chosen both to duplicate the "Votes for Women" banners of the mid-nineteenth century and to embody the College flower, the iris. Each year, Elmira College students can be found planting irises on Mountain Day.

College Medallion and Academic Mace

As a symbol of his office, President Dolan will receive a special medallion representing a version of the Elmira College seal. The medallion is cast bronze with an antique finish, cast from a version of the seal that hung for some years in the entry of McGraw Hall. It has an abstract rope design around the circumference, the words "Elmira College" at the top, and the word "president" at the bottom. In the inner circle is a representation of Cowles Hall, the original College building. At the bottom of the inner circle is "1855," the date of the College's founding and of the construction of Cowles Hall.

Adapted from medieval practice, the Academic Mace is used in formal ceremonies, proclaiming the standing of a college, the dignity of its traditions, and the authority of its president. The Elmira College Mace, carried by the College Marshal, was crafted from the baluster of a railing in the College's original building, Cowles Hall (1855). College emblems in the design include an iris (the College flower), an octagon (the College symbol, from the central structure of Cowles Hall), the College seal, and an acorn (the oak being an early symbol of Elmira College).

Carried by a senior member of Administration, the Simeon Benjamin walking stick was a prized possession of Simeon Benjamin, founder of Elmira College. He used this favorite walking stick until his death in 1868. It bears the inscriptions, "To Simeon Benjamin, from the ladies of the faculty, January 1, 1861."

Academic Regalia

The gowns and hoods worn on solemn occasions perpetuate traditions as old as the world's first universities. While European institutions display great diversity in the design and color of academic regalia, their American counterparts in 1895 adopted a code of regulation which makes it possible for the academic community to identify (from the cut of the gown and the color of the hood) the wearer's degree, the subject in which it was conferred, and the institution which granted it.

The cut of the gown identifies the degree. The Bachelor's gown has pointed sleeves and is worn closed. The Master's gown has oblong-cut sleeves slit at the elbow and is worn open or closed. The Doctor's gown, which is also worn open or closed, is paneled in velvet and has bell-shaped sleeves, usually crossed with bands of velvet.

The length of the hood also identifies the degree; thirty-six inches for a Bachelor's, forty-two inches for a Master's, and forty-eight inches for a Doctorate's hood. The color of the velvet binding of the hood identifies the wearer's specialized field of study. These colors include white for Arts and Letters, scarlet for Theology, purple for Law, green for Medicine, dark blue for Philosophy, gold for Science, brown for Architecture and Fine Arts, pink for Music, light brown for Business, light blue for Education, peacock blue for International Affairs, and peach for Nursing.

The silk lining of the hood displays the color or colors of the institution awarding the degree. Earned and honorary degrees awarded by Elmira College are shown by hoods lined in purple and gold.

Elmira College Alma Mater

All sons and daughters, hail to thee our Alma Mater!
Sing loud her praises, ever laud her name.
In thankfulness to her, oh what can we give?
Keep her before us; by her example live.
Here then, Elmira, mem'ries that inspire
A lasting and loyal love and devotion to you.
When we leave your fair halls, untried paths to know,
As you have taught us, be it ever so.

Written by Mary Logan Bench, Class of 1946

Official Delegates, Felicitations From Colleges, Universities, and Learned Societies

Listed in order of the institution's founding, oldest to newest.

1797	HARTWICK COLLEGE Paul Vecchiho
1831	NEW YORK UNIVERSITY Kevin Drumm
1853	MANHATTAN UNIVERSITY
1858	BENEDICTINE COLLEGE Kelly Vowels
1861	VASSAR COLLEGE Nicole Scalessa
1871	SUNY GENESEO Karen Mach
1903	SKIDMORE COLLEGE
1905	MARIST UNIVERSITY
1946	LEMOYNE UNIVERSITY Patti Pautz
1946	UTICA UNIVERSITY Samantha Bentley
1948	ST. JOHN FISHER UNIVERSITY Rebecca Keiffer
1955	MOLLOY UNIVERSITY
1957	CORNING COMMUNITY COLLEGE Dr. Terence Finley



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