

# Georgia Gwinnett College Hosts Investiture

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### Georgia Gwinnett College Hosts Investiture for President Jann L. Joseph

Nearly two years after Georgia Gwinnett College announced Dr. Jann L. Joseph as its third president, GGC hosted an investiture ceremony celebrating the occasion. The event was held Friday, April 1 at 10:30am in GGC's L-VIS building.

"As you all know, we canceled this event two years ago and sought the perfect time to reschedule it. And over the last two years, we all realized there is no perfect time—there is only today," said President Joseph during the opening of her speech.

"As I reflect on this occasion, I am reminded of an African proverb, and it captures the significance of the day. The term is *Ubuntu*, and in Zulu it means 'humanity' and is translated to say, 'I am, because you are,'" said President Joseph.

"Today I want you all to reflect with me and see that I am here today because all of you are on this journey with me."

The investiture ceremony is part of a long academic tradition which celebrates the first year of office. However, the celebrations had been postponed since 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Surrounded by members of GGC's faculty, staff, and student leaders, President Joseph spoke of the importance education has had on her life and that of others.



Photo by B.Young

As a first-generation college graduate, President Joseph emphasized the importance that her parents placed on education. Her parents did not complete elementary school themselves, but worked hard to encourage her and her four siblings of the importance of education.

“They did the impossible and found a way to give us all something they didn’t have,” said President Joseph. “Something they could only barely understand and could only dream of.”

President Joseph continued to thank the many members of her family and friends who were unable to make the occasion, but were able to attend virtually. This came as a reminder of how the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect the GGC community.

Dr. Joseph became President of GGC in May 2019 and within her first year the pandemic arrived into Georgia full force. She addressed the ways that the school had to move to navigate the tough road ahead.

“This amazing school, Georgia Gwinnett College, was founded on four pillars: scholarship, leadership, service, and creativity. And in tough times, you go to your foundations,” said President Joseph. She noted that during the pandemic, GGC came up with many creative solutions to continue running. The college continued to expand its leadership by recruiting a full cabinet, hiring three new deans, and establishing a senior leadership team.

“So today I am not just here to share hopes and dreams. Today is about presenting to you a deep and realistic understanding [about] what this leadership team is here to accomplish.

### **The History of Georgia Gwinnett College**

The occasion was not only a new beginning for Dr. Joseph, but was also Chancellor Dr. Sonny Perdue’s first act as the new chancellor for the University System of Georgia (USG).

“As Chancellor of the University System: I believe in this institution, I believe in its mission, and I want to say wholeheartedly, I believe in President Jann Joseph,” said Perdue.

Georgia Gwinnett College was founded in May 2005, when current Chancellor Perdue was governor. Though it first opened its doors to 118 students, that number has rapidly grown to over 10,000 currently enrolled students. President Joseph has placed significant emphasis on the enrollment, planning, and graduation rates of the college.

As the college continues to grow, President Joseph mentioned several changes that the college intends to enact to continue instilling itself as part of the community.



Photo by B.Young

President Joseph's plans included a number of infrastructure updates to the college, as well as building partnerships with businesses and local nonprofits. According to the [GGC website](#), in addition to serving as a chair for the USG Council on General Education, the president also serves on the boards of the Atlanta Regional Council for Higher Education, the Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce and several other committees.

"It is an exciting time as GGC looks to grow in numbers and in partnerships throughout northeast, metro-Atlanta and beyond," said Harold Reynolds, Chairman of the Board of Regents of the USG. "The education students get at GGC has the power to change our communities and our state in exciting ways," said Chairman Reynolds. "Georgia Gwinnett College may be new in terms of years, but it is strong, and it is in very capable hands."