



The Inauguration of  
**Michael A. Elliott '92**  
20th President of Amherst College

**Friday, October 28, 2022**

Amherst, Massachusetts





## About the 20th President

Michael A. Elliott, class of 1992, is a distinguished scholar of American literature and culture of the 19th and early 20th centuries. He has published widely on the history of fiction in the United States, on Native American literature and on practices of public history. He holds a B.A. from Amherst College and an M.A. and Ph.D. in English and comparative literature from Columbia University.

Prior to being appointed to the presidency of Amherst in 2022, Elliott was a faculty member and administrator at Emory University for 24 years. From 2016 to 2022 he served as interim dean and then dean of the Emory College of Arts and Sciences, the university's core undergraduate division and home of the liberal arts. In this role, Elliott spearheaded critical work to establish race and inequality as a signature research and teaching strength of Emory and made significant advances in enhancing faculty diversity. He also increased funding for undergraduate research and garnered substantial philanthropic support for need-based financial aid.

Elliott's exceptional support of student success at Emory included developing The Liberal Arts Edge, a program that helps students articulate the value of their liberal arts experiences and connect with resources such as internships and undergraduate research opportunities. With a substantial grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, he co-created a Humanities Pathways initiative that comprehensively embedded post-college career planning into the curriculum to ensure that all students would feel prepared for professional success. Elliott's focus on student engagement and development was recognized in 2020 when the graduating class awarded him the Brit Katz Senior Appreciation Award.

During his years in academic leadership, Elliott has maintained an active scholarly career. At Emory, he was the Charles Howard Candler Professor of English. His acclaimed book *Custerology* (University of Chicago Press, 2007) explores how George Armstrong Custer and the Indian Wars continue to be both a powerful symbol of America's violent past and a crucial key to understanding the nation's present. His earlier volume, *The Culture Concept* (University of Minnesota Press, 2002), traces the origins of the concept of "culture" that undergirds the evolution of cultural studies in the United States. In addition to these monographs, Elliott has co-edited two volumes in American literary studies and serves on the editorial board of *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. His scholarship has been recognized with fellowships from Yale's Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Harvard's Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History and the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia.

Raised in Tucson, Ariz., Elliott met his wife, Jennifer W. Mathews, class of 1991, at Amherst. They have two children.



## History of the College

In 1821 a broad group of community members in and around Amherst, Mass., founded the Amherst Collegiate Institution for the “education of indigent young men of piety and talents for the Christian ministry.” The first president, Zephaniah Swift Moore, had previously been president of Williams College; the close relationship and rivalry between Amherst and Williams continues to this day. The Massachusetts legislature granted Amherst College its charter in 1825. That same year, the College adopted its corporate seal and motto, *Terras Irradiant* (“Let them enlighten the lands”).

From its start, Amherst showed awareness of and support for those who might not commonly have had access to higher education—for example, graduating its first African American student, Edward Jones, in 1826. Joseph Hardy Neesima of the class of 1870 was the first Japanese student to graduate from a Western college and went on to found Doshisha University, Amherst’s sister institution in Kyoto, Japan.

Amherst’s other historic “firsts” include the world’s first intercollegiate baseball game, against Williams in 1859; the country’s first collegiate physical education and hygiene program, founded in 1860; and the nation’s first undergraduate neuroscience program, established in 1973. The first (and so far only) Amherst graduate to serve as president of the United States was Calvin Coolidge, class of 1895.

Rose Olver became the first woman appointed to a tenure-track faculty position at the College in 1963. In 1974 the Board of Trustees voted in favor of coeducation, and the following year Amherst matriculated its first women students.

For more than 200 years, Amherst has demonstrated steadfast confidence in the value of the liberal arts and the importance of critical thinking. Today, it is one of the nation’s premier liberal arts institutions, renowned for its dedicated faculty, open curriculum, generous financial aid policies, diverse student body and scenic 1,000-acre campus. Its 1,800 students can earn bachelor of arts degrees in 41 fields of study. Through their work in science, education, law, medicine, politics, the arts and other endeavors, and through their contributions to their families and communities, more than 23,000 living Amherst alumni continue to “enlighten the lands.”



# The Installation Ceremony

## PROCESSIONAL

Overture from “Music for the Royal Fireworks”  
Composed by Georg Friedrich Händel  
Performed by members of the Amherst Symphony Orchestra  
Led by Mark Lane Swanson  
*Director and Conductor*

## INVOCATION

The Rev. Phillip A. Jackson, Class of 1985  
*19th Rector of Trinity Church Wall Street*  
*Member of the Amherst College Board of Trustees*

## WELCOME

Andrew J. Nussbaum, Class of 1985  
*Chair of the Amherst College Board of Trustees*

## REMARKS

Lisa Brooks  
*Henry S. Poler ’59 Presidential Teaching Professor of*  
*English and American Studies*

## MUSICAL INTERLUDE

“Walk Out on the Water”  
Composed by Royal Canoe; arrangement by Geung Kroeker-Lee  
Performed by the Amherst College Glee Club  
Led by Arianne Abela  
*Director*

## GREETINGS

*On behalf of the alumni*  
Katherine K. Chia, Class of 1988, Parent Class of 2022  
*President of the Society of the Alumni*

*On behalf of the students*  
Sirus Wheaton, Class of 2023  
*President of the Association of Amherst Students*

*On behalf of the staff*  
Dale R. Hendricks  
*Director of Admission and Financial Aid Systems and Strategies*

*On behalf of the faculty*  
Gregory S. Call  
*Peter R. Pouncey Professor of Mathematics*

## MUSICAL INTERLUDE

“Now We Can Begin”  
Composed by Arianne Abela  
Performed by the Amherst College Glee Club  
Led by Arianne Abela  
*Director*

## READING

“Our Story Keeps Writing Itself”

Written and Read by Haoran Tong, Class of 2023

## REMARKS

Carla Freeman

*Interim Dean, Emory College of Arts and Sciences*

*Goodrich C. White Professor of Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies*

*Emory University*

## MUSICAL INTERLUDE

“O Amherst”

Composed by James Shelley Hamilton, Class of 1906, with revised lyrics  
by members of the classes of 1961, 2019, 2020 and 2022

Performed by the Amherst College Glee Club

Led by Arianne Abela

*Director*

## PRESENTATION OF GIFTS AND SYMBOLS OF OFFICE

Conway Cane

Presented by Betsy Cannon Smith, Class of 1984, Parent Class of 2015

*Chief Advancement Officer*

Keys to the College

Presented by Bradley T. Stafford

*Lead Mechanical Shop Technician*

College Seal

Presented by Catherine Epstein

*Provost and Dean of the Faculty*

*Henry Steele Commager Professor of History*

Charter

Presented by Andrew J. Nussbaum, Class of 1985

*Chair of the Amherst College Board of Trustees*

## INVESTITURE OF THE PRESIDENT

Andrew J. Nussbaum, Class of 1985

*Chair of the Amherst College Board of Trustees*

## INAUGURAL ADDRESS

Michael A. Elliott, Class of 1992

*20th President of Amherst College*

## CLOSING

Andrew J. Nussbaum, Class of 1985

*Chair of the Amherst College Board of Trustees*

*Please remain in your seats during the recessional. A community celebration will follow.*

## RECESSIONAL

“Clef Club March”

Composed by James Reese Europe

Performed by members of the Amherst Symphony Orchestra

Led by Mark Lane Swanson

*Director and Conductor*



## Symbols and Gifts

As we celebrate the inauguration of Amherst's newest president, the community marks the occasion with gifts and apparel that are filled with meaning and history.

### A NOTE ON ACADEMIC REGALIA

Much of what is associated with the dress of academic pageantry dates back to medieval Europe, when gowns and hoods were the primary attire in educated monastic circles. Amherst's president wears a black doctoral robe bearing four velvet chevrons upon the sleeves, colored purple to represent Amherst. Regalia—including gowns, hoods and caps—are often colored according to one's field of study or school. The cap is an eight-sided doctoral tam, and the president wears a doctoral hood of white and purple satin trimmed in purple velvet, draped over the shoulders and attached to the robe.

### KEYS TO THE COLLEGE

The four brass skeleton keys that are a part of today's ceremony were formerly carried by Charles Thompson, a custodian at the College for more than 40 years in the second half of the 19th century. The keys to the College are presented today in a box created for the 2011 inauguration of President Biddy Martin.

### COLLEGE SEAL

The College adopted the design for its first seal in 1825. "The seal is a declaration of the original purpose of the institution," said a 1939 article in *The Amherst Student*. The design of the seal has been revised several times since then. *Terras Irradiant* ("Let them enlighten the lands") is the Latin motto on the seal. *Sigill. Coll. Amherst. Mass. Nov. Ang. MDCCCXXV* is translated as "Seal of Amherst College, Massachusetts, New England, 1825."

### CHARTER

First drafted in 1824, granted in 1825 and amended 13 times, the Amherst College Charter outlines the governance of the College and the responsibilities of its caretakers. The copy of the charter presented today was used in the 1994 inauguration ceremony of President Tom Gerety.

### CONWAY CANE

It is an Amherst tradition to present new graduates, as well as special honorees, with a commemorative cane. One of the few written references to this early tradition at the College is in the 1871 volume *Student Life at Amherst College*, in which George Rugg Cutting details it. Today the Conway Cane—named in honor of a gift from Brian J. Conway, class of 1980, and Kevin J. Conway, class of 1980—features a distinctive brass plate with the College's seal. The cane used in today's ceremony is from 2003, the year this tradition was revived by graduating seniors.



# Academic Delegates

**1636 | HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

Ingrid Nelson

**1701 | YALE UNIVERSITY**

Rick A. López  
Amherst Class of 1993

**1740 | UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA**

Louis A. Matis  
Amherst Class of 1971

**1746 | PRINCETON UNIVERSITY**

Mary C. McKittrick

**1764 | BROWN UNIVERSITY**

Richard Rambuss  
Amherst Class of 1983

**1793 | WILLIAMS COLLEGE**

Michael F. Wagner  
Amherst Class of 1986, Parent Class of 2019

**1794 | BOWDOIN COLLEGE**

Allen Springer  
Amherst Class of 1973

**1800 | MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE**

Michelle McCauley

**1812 | HAMILTON COLLEGE**

Quincy D. Newell  
Amherst Class of 1997

**1813 | COLBY COLLEGE**

Alicia E. Ellis  
Amherst Class of 1998

**1823 | TRINITY COLLEGE**

Dickens Mathieu  
Amherst Class of 1987

**1831 | WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY**

Mark A. Hovey

**1833 | OBERLIN COLLEGE**

Sylvia Brandt

**1834 | TULANE UNIVERSITY**

Brian T. Edwards

**1836 | EMORY UNIVERSITY**

Enku Gelaye

**1837 | DAVIDSON COLLEGE**

Douglas A. Hicks

**1837 | MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE**

Beverly Daniel Tatum

**1838 | DUKE UNIVERSITY**

Kathryn Derose

**1839 | BOSTON UNIVERSITY**

Mesay Melese Gebresilasse

**1852 | TUFTS UNIVERSITY**

Yvonne Halpern Baevsky

**1855 | BATES COLLEGE**

Janet S. Tobin

**1863 | BOSTON COLLEGE**

Joseph F. Quinn  
Amherst Class of 1969

**1863 | UNIVERSITY OF  
MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST**

Tricia Serio

**1865 | DEAN COLLEGE**

Kenneth Elmore

**1866 | CARLETON COLLEGE**

Deirdre C. Weaver

**1871 | SMITH COLLEGE**

Kathleen McCartney

**1875 | DOSHISHA UNIVERSITY**

Shigeyuki Atarashi

**1876 | THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY**

Karen J. Sánchez-Eppler

**1877 | RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN**

Steven Bellofatto

**1885 | BRYN MAWR COLLEGE**

Tekla A. Harms

**1891 | CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

Sandra L. Burkett

**1901 | UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND**

Robert D. Kelly



## Academic Delegates *(continued)*

**1911 | CONNECTICUT COLLEGE**

Sara Becton Ardrey

**1965 | FIVE COLLEGES, INCORPORATED**

Sarah K.A. Pfatteicher

**1929 | MARIST COLLEGE**

Kevin C. Weinman

**1965 | HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE**

Edward Wingenbach

**1932 | FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY**

Michael Witmore

**1974 | CONSORTIUM ON FINANCING  
HIGHER EDUCATION**

Janet L. Rapelye

**1962 | GREENFIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Michelle K. Schutt

**1978 | PREP FOR PREP**

Jackson A. Collins  
Amherst Class of 2000



## Amherst College Board of Trustees

Theodore W. Beneski, Class of 1978

Jeffrey L. Bleich, Class of 1983

Mary Elizabeth Cisneros, Class of 1989

Michael A. Elliott, Class of 1992

Naana A. Frimpong, Class of 2000

Douglas C. Grissom, Class of 1989

Rejji P. Hayes, Class of 1997

Matthew N. Hulsizer, Class of 1991

Phillip A. Jackson, Class of 1985

Arthur W. Koenig, Class of 1966

Chantal E. Kordula, Class of 1994

Simon C. Krinsky, Class of 1996

Eunei Lee, Class of 1989

David W. MacLennan, Class of 1981

David A. Novak, Class of 1991

Andrew J. Nussbaum, Class of 1985, Chair

William A. O'Malley, Class of 1984

Dwight M. Poler, Class of 1987

Sarah Bloom Raskin, Class of 1983

Christine Noyer Seaver, Class of 1981

Elizabeth C. Shelburne, Class of 2001

Paul M. Smith, Class of 1976

Shirley M. Tilghman

Kimberlee D. Wyche-Etheridge, Class of 1987

Nicolas D. Zerbib, Class of 1993





# Presidents of Amherst College

Michael A. Elliott, Class of 1992, 2022–  
Carolyn “Biddy” Martin, 2011–2022\*  
Anthony W. Marx, 2003–2011\*  
Tom Gerety, 1994–2003\*  
Peter R. Pouncey, 1984–1994  
Julian Gibbs, 1979–1983  
John William Ward, 1971–1979  
Calvin Hastings Plimpton, Class of 1939, 1960–1971  
Charles Woolsey Cole, Class of 1927, 1946–1960  
Stanley King, Class of 1903, 1932–1946  
Arthur Stanley Pease, 1927–1932  
George Daniel Olds, 1924–1927  
Alexander Meiklejohn, 1912–1924  
George Harris, Class of 1866, 1899–1912  
Merrill Edwards Gates, 1890–1899  
Julius Hawley Seelye, Class of 1849, 1876–1890  
William Augustus Stearns, 1854–1876  
Edward Hitchcock, 1845–1854  
Heman Humphrey, 1823–1845  
Zephaniah Swift Moore, 1821–1823

*\*In attendance today*

## WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO THE PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

Lisa Brooks  
Katherine K. Chia, Class of 1988  
Dale R. Hendricks  
Phillip A. Jackson, Class of 1985  
Kannan “Jagu” Jagannathan  
Andrenae Jones, Class of 2023  
Chantal E. Kordula, Class of 1994  
David A. Novak, Class of 1991  
Andrew J. Nussbaum, Class of 1985, Chair  
Dwight M. Poler, Class of 1987  
Sarah Bloom Raskin, Class of 1983  
Kathryn “Kate” Redmond, Class of 2023  
Paul M. Smith, Class of 1976  
Bradley T. Stafford  
Shirley M. Tilghman  
Martha M. Umphrey



# Our Story Keeps Writing Itself

BY HAORAN TONG, CLASS OF 2023

Through a moonlit mist hovering over fresh snow,  
roofs swaying and hiding away—  
the Holyoke Range stretches far,  
which the voices from our books prolong.  
We flow in the dim lamplight,  
seeking encounter with each other's shadows.  
In this quiet town turned home  
(where dated oaks implant their seeds in wet soil),  
greetings from two hundred years  
coalesce into a faithful present.  
Without questioning who we were or where we might go,  
we all converge to illuminate the minds  
until the last evening glow  
burgeons from autumnal maples.  
Earth and sky allow us  
to search, to find liberation,  
to bear witness to the truth,  
to explore with scholars and friends  
solemn chimeras made of words.  
Our story keeps writing itself.  
Still water runs deep,  
red leaves tint the brick walls,  
pavements crisscross, guiding us  
to the delicate scent of pine trees.  
Every separation prepares us for a reunion;  
every return, a fresh beginning.  
We collect a fleeting sense of permanence,  
breathing the same transience of an unstable time  
for our lives to steadily tremble—  
to grow with fractures, yet develop still—  
to fill our eyes with sparks of memories  
and find our hearts a home.  
Together we linger as the warmth of poems  
brings rebirth,  
and, as the late wind sweeps across the memorial hill,  
the ripples from a shooting star are collectively heard.





*Bound by friendship's charter  
To the college we have made  
With eye and mind and heart.*

—FROM "HYMN TO AMHERST"

Lyrics by Janet Barton Morgan

