



Brenau
UNIVERSITY
1878

THE INVESTITURE OF

David L. Barnett, Ph.D.

ELEVENTH PRESIDENT OF BRENAU UNIVERSITY

AUGUST 22, 2024



Founded in 1878, Brenau University stands as a distinctive institution of higher learning. The unique name, Brenau, coined from a blend of the German word *brennen*, meaning “to burn,” and *aurum*, the Latin word for “gold,” underscores that singularity. It forms the foundation of the Brenau motto, “As Gold Refined by Fire.”

The former frontier boomtown of Gainesville, located in the foothills of Georgia’s Appalachian Mountains, planned for progressive, evolutionary growth. Civic leaders headed by Gainesville First Baptist Church Pastor W.C. Wilkes established the Georgia Baptist Female Seminary to provide much-needed higher education opportunities for young women. By the beginning of the 20th century, the college evolved into a private, nonsectarian liberal arts institution. Stewardship passed to the independent Brenau Board of Trustees in 1911. Brenau became a university in 1992 and today is designated a Level VI institution by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to grant degrees at all levels from associate to doctoral.

LEADERSHIP

Brenau has been governed by 11 presidents. The first administrator, Rev. W.C. Wilkes, led the institution until his death in 1886, when Dr. A.W. Van Hoose purchased the school. Dr. H.J. Pearce became president in 1893 and, except during 1910-13 when Dr. T.J. Simmons served as president, served almost continuously until his death in 1943. For about two years after Pearce’s death, his widow, Lucile Townsend Pearce, oversaw

the committee that led the school until a new president was hired. Dr. Josiah Crudup served as president from 1945-67 and was followed by Dr. William K. Clark from 1969-70. Brenau was led by Dr. James T. Rogers from 1970-85 and Dr. John S. Burd was president 1985-04. Dr. Ed L. Schrader served as president from 2005-19, and was followed by Dr. Anne A. Skleder from 2019-23. In February 2024, Dr. David Barnett was named the 11th president of Brenau University.

ACADEMIC AND GEOGRAPHIC EVOLUTION

The Women’s College of Brenau University continues to provide a residential experience on its Gainesville campus and remains integral to the university’s mission. In the late 1960s Brenau began teaching career-oriented majors, including teacher education, nursing and business administration, that were compatible with the strong liberal arts foundation of its core studies. In the early 1970s, the college created coeducational evening and weekend studies as well as off-campus instructional sites designed for adult learners. It also developed graduate studies in business, education and public administration, while expanding career-oriented programs. Trustees also authorized expansions to include coeducational programs at multiple locations.

Brenau operates graduate and undergraduate programs for men and women in Gainesville, including the newly established Downtown Campus, and an additional instructional site in the Atlanta suburb of Norcross. The university has provided online offerings since the early 2000s and offers many undergraduate and graduate degree programs online.

President's Message

I am honored to have been selected by Brenau University's Board of Trustees to serve as the eleventh President of Brenau University. As the university embarks on its 146th year of serving the communities of northeast Georgia, I am humbled and excited to lead the university.

Higher education is a tapestry woven together from threads of personal ambition, community investment and collective achievement. Brenau is a learning community that is personally transformative and intellectually expansive. This university has the enviable position afforded private institutions of higher education of providing the intellectual freedom to discern and articulate the most effective ways to remain mission focused.

With a mission that "challenges students to live extraordinary lives of personal and professional fulfillment" in the modern world, Brenau encourages the exploration of timeless truths amidst an urgency for pragmatic outcomes in a context that prepares students for a "lifetime of intellectual accomplishment and appreciation of artistic expression through a curriculum enriched by the liberal arts, scientific inquiry and global awareness."

The heart of my remarks today, *A Thriving Future*, is grounded in the foundational sentiment in the university's mission statement. More broadly, the context in which the university creates those challenges is propelled by our vision statement of meeting the changing needs of the community.

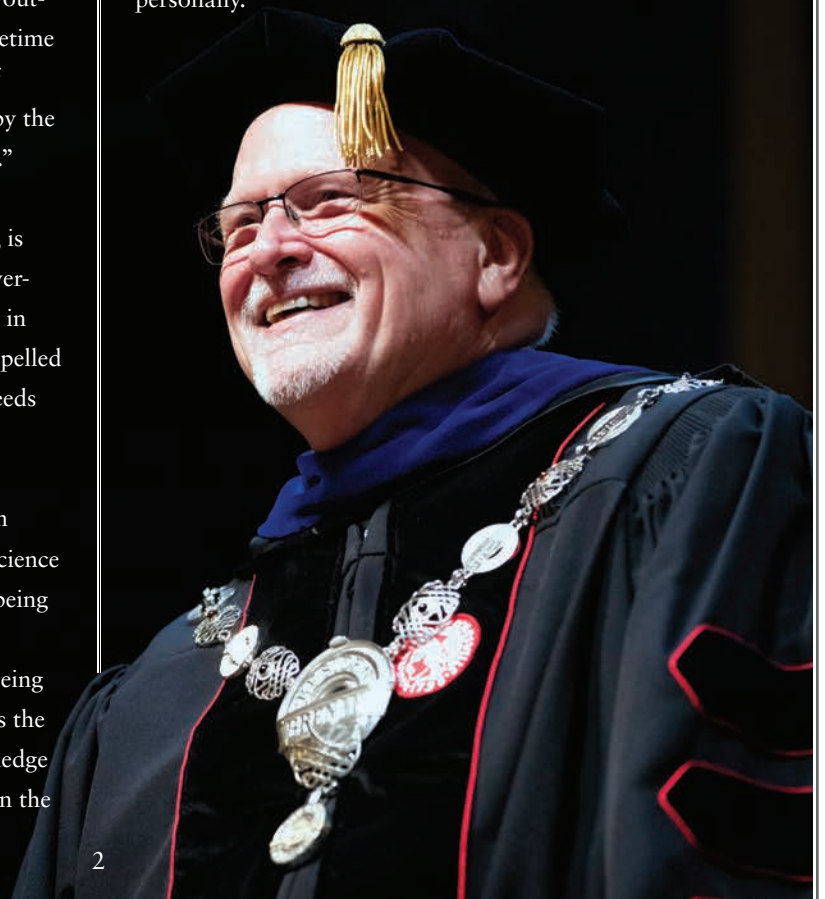
We translate the Greek word *prassein* into praxis in English to express the meaningful practice of art, science or skills demonstrating a command of the subject being used in a purposeful manner. It is this thought that grounds H.J. Pearce's line in the Brenau Ideal of "being rather than seeming" to communicate that praxis is the movement from merely the accumulation of knowledge toward practicing knowledge in meaningful ways in the

communities we serve. *A Thriving Future* is a call to action.

What is required of us for *A Thriving Future*? Our endeavors require combining the pursuit of the highest levels of excellence with a strong sense of purpose in all that we do here. It is demonstrated by practicing academic excellence: research, teaching and practice. Likewise, it is demonstrated by being good for those participating in the academic enterprise who are working to meet the needs of our community.

I am confident that *A Thriving Future* is attainable for Brenau, for our students, faculty and staff, and for our communities because I believe in the good work we are capable of achieving.

Thank you for attending today's ceremony and being a part of this special day for the university and for me personally.



Order of Service

| | |
|---|---|
| MUSICAL PRELUDE | Mr. Ben Leaptrott |
| <i>Canon in D</i> - Pachelbel | <i>Assistant Affiliate Professor of Music</i> |
| PROCESSIONAL* | Ben Leaptrott |
| <i>Trumpet Voluntary</i> - Henry Purcell | |
| NATIONAL ANTHEM | Ms. Sarah DeLay |
| | <i>Vocalist</i> |
| INVOCATION | Rev. Jamey Prickett |
| | <i>Senior Pastor, Gainesville First United Methodist Church</i> |
| WELCOME | Jessi Shrout, Ed.D. |
| | <i>Alumni Association Board President, Chair of Mathematics & Science</i> |
| GREETINGS FROM THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION | Ms. Ariana Hatcher |
| | <i>SGA President</i> |
| <i>I WANT YOU TO THRIVE</i> | Ms. Claudia George |
| Poem by Phil Santos | <i>Director of Institutional Research</i> |
| GREETINGS FROM THE CITY OF GAINESVILLE | Mayor Sam Couvillon |
| GREETINGS FROM HALL COUNTY | Commissioner Billy Powell |
| AFFIRMATIONS..... | Whitney McDowell-Robinson, Ph.D. |
| | <i>Vice President of Student Development and Engagement</i> |
| | Ms. Jody Wall |
| | <i>Chief of Staff</i> |
| | Mr. Matt Thomas |
| | <i>Vice President of University Advancement</i> |
| | Jim Eck, Ph.D. |
| | <i>Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs</i> |
| CHARGE TO THE PRESIDENT | Mr. Michael H. Smith |
| AND PRESENTATION OF UNIVERSITY MEDALLION | <i>Chair, Brenau University Board of Trustees</i> |
| PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE..... | David L. Barnett, Ph.D. |
| | <i>President</i> |
| PROCLAMATIONS | Sam Couvillon |
| | Billy Powell |
| ALMA MATER | Brenau Vocal Chamber Ensemble |
| | directed by Ashley Conway, Ph.D. |
| | <i>Assistant Professor of Music Education</i> |
| BENEDICTION..... | Rev. Carolyn Clifton |
| | <i>Associate Pastor, Gainesville First United Methodist Church</i> |
| RECESSIONAL | Ben Leaptrott |
| <i>Ode to Joy, 9th Symphony</i> - Ludwig van Beethoven | |

President Barnett Biography

David L. Barnett, Ph.D., is the 11th president of Brenau University.

A native of Smyrna, Georgia, Barnett earned a Doctor of Philosophy in educational leadership and organizational development and a Specialist in Education from the University of Louisville. He also earned a Master of Divinity in Christian Education from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a Bachelor of Arts from Mercer University. He is a member of the academic honor society Phi Kappa Phi. He was the recipient of many awards and honors during his educational pursuits including the Graduate Dean's Citation from the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Louisville.

Holding the conviction that education is a cornerstone for enhancing personal development and societal good, Barnett has spent three decades in higher education creating learning communities that challenge individuals to improve their individual lives and the lives of others. He affirms the historical perspective that education is the great equalizer.

Barnett has served in leadership roles at six universities in Georgia and Kentucky, including appointments spanning the spectrum of administrative and academic leadership. He held positions as chief financial and risk management officer, dean of a college of education, assistant vice president and dean of student life and development, and academic dean of distance learning programs. Early in his career, he served as director of financial aid, director of international programs and director of student life.

Barnett has taught graduate and undergraduate courses in education and student success strategies. Currently, he teaches doctoral courses in education and serves as chair for doctoral students' dissertations. He has presented at numerous national and regional professional conferences on topics related to strategic planning, enterprise risk management, adult learning theory, organizational leadership and development, and the application of systems theory in higher education management.

Barnett serves on boards for many non-profit educational and community groups. He is a member of the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges and board member for the Lake Lanier Olympic Foundation, Quinlan Visual Arts Center, and Georgia Independent Colleges Association.

Barnett and his wife, Kimberly, have a son, daughter and son-in-law and grandson. He is an active member of Gainesville First United Methodist Church and participates in civic activities. He is an avid sports fan and enjoys various outdoor activities.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity as Brenau's president to contribute to the university's legacy of high-quality education and service to our students and the community."

David L. Barnett, Ph.D.



Mission Statement

Brenau University challenges students to live extraordinary lives of personal and professional fulfillment. As students pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees or non-degree programs at Brenau campuses and online, each prepares for a lifetime of intellectual accomplishment and appreciation of artistic expression through a curriculum enriched by the liberal arts, scientific inquiry and global awareness.

The Brenau Ideal

To find satisfaction in being rather than in seeming;
To find joy in doing rather than in dreaming;
To be prepared for service thereby earning the right to be served;
To be pure in heart, vigorous in mind, discreet in action;
To love deeply, fear nothing, hate never;
To enjoy that freedom which comes from knowledge of the "Truth";
To be modestly conscious of the limitations of human knowledge
and serenely confident of the limitless reaches of human endeavor –
This is the ideal of Brenau.

-H. J. Pearce, Ph.D.

The Brenau Alma Mater

Brenau, how nobly we see thee,
With honors richly crowned;
In all this fair, fair Southland
Thy equal is not found.
Oh, happy the day that we sought thee
By Chattahoochee's side;
Where spring gives its first kiss to nature,
And summer long doth 'bide

The University Mace

The Brenau University Mace, commissioned by Brenau President John S. Burd, visually interprets the university's heritage and symbolizes the power and authority of learning. Designed by Georgia jewelry-making and metalsmithing artist Richard Mafong, the piece comprises a sterling silver head topped with a gold ring and studded with onyx stones atop a 5-foot ebony wood staff. Engravings include the Brenau emblem and names of all university presidents.

Since 1996, the longest-serving faculty member has carried the mace to lead processions and recessions at formal occasions.



The President's Medallion

Since 1998, the presidential regalia for formal convocations and commencement ceremonies has included the Mafong-designed Brenau University Presidential Medallion and necklace as a symbol of the authority vested in the president as the academic leader of the university. A 44-inch sterling silver chain with spacers of semi-precious citrine and onyx includes 14 roundels with space for engraved names of up to 28 presidents. The pendant is made from sterling silver, gold, and black enamel.



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