

“You were made for this moment in time:” First Year SIU Students of Dental Medicine Take Their Professional Oath

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EDWARDSVILLE - The White Coat Ceremony celebrating 50 Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine (SIU SDM) first-year students representing the Class of 2027 and six international advanced placement students representing Class of 2025 was held on Friday, October 6 on the campus of Lewis and Clark Community College in nearby Godfrey, IL. SIUE Chancellor James T. Minor, PhD acknowledged the “privilege and responsibility” of pursuing a career in dentistry [in a state where 2.8 million people live in an area federally designated as having a shortage of dental health professionals.](#)



"Without question the University and this School of Dental Medicine is committed to creating social and economic mobility for individuals, but it is also committed to solving pressing social problems and producing leaders who will shape a changing world," said Minor. "You were made for this moment in time."

Keynote speaker Cornell Thomas, associate professor emeritus, requested students stand and offer their guests of supporters a round of applause. "You have to realize that you can't do this alone."

Thomas offered his "Tips from Thomas" developed for online exchanges during the pandemic which include, "Always give back" and "Surround yourself with positive

people.” Thomas retired after a 44-year career in practice. He holds a current appointment as a disciplinary hearing officer by the Supreme Court of Missouri. “You have a chance to make people’s lives better. Don’t take their confidence in you for granted.”

Faculty presented students individually with their white coats. Dr. Saulius Drukteinis led the students collectively in reciting the professional oath based on the Hippocratic Oath.

Master of ceremonies Duane Douglas, DMD, associate dean for faculty introduced colleagues and retiring faculty members on the stage. Courtney Chapman, a Year IV student, reminded students of the legacy of their last names on their coats. “Never quit,” said Chapman. “You’re a dental student at Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine. That fact alone is that you did it—that you can continue to do it.”