

David Maxwell gave his last lecture as president of Drake University in Sheslow Auditorium last week.  
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# Goodbye, Maxwell



## CAMPUS EVENTS

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At age 66, president David Maxwell's climbed Mount Kilimanjaro with the entire Drake University football team and his two sons.

"It was the hardest thing any of us have ever done in our lives, and I was three times as old as the other people doing it," Maxwell said.

This has come to be one of his memories of his time at Drake.

"I'll tell you standing there ... you felt like your head was touching the sky," Maxwell said.

## David Maxwell presents his last lecture as university president

"It was probably the most spiritual moment of my entire life because whatever it is that you believe in whether it is Jesus or Muhammad or Buddha or quantum physics or anything in between, you were a lot closer to it. You were just touching the universe. I get goose bumps from just remembering it."

The story of Maxwell's trip to Africa was part of his speech for The Last Lecture series.

The lecture was a partnership between Student Senate, Mortar Board Honor Society and Delta Sigma Pi.

In previous years, Delta Sigma Pi has done a last lecture, but this year took on new meaning because it actually was Maxwell's last lecture.

"We used to ask the question, 'So if this was your last lecture, what would you say?'" Delta Sigma Pi president Russell Pang said. "It was pretty natural given that President Maxwell was going to retire in May, so that is how this idea came about to make it him

the speaker for the last lecture."

The speech, held in Sheslow Auditorium, was meant to allow Maxwell to open up to students

"This is the time for students not only just to celebrate him, but allow students to see more in detail about who he is and what he has done for the university," Pang said.

Maxwell opened the night by joking about his 16 years at Drake and how this was wrapping up his career.

"The ideal introduction for me would be David became president of Drake University in 1999 and he still is," Maxwell said. "None of this is because I enjoy talking about myself because I really don't but I want to leave you with two important thoughts because this is after all my last lecture."

Maxwell then chronologize his higher educational life, stressing the importance of mentors.

One of those mentors being his father, Jimmy Maxwell, the famous trumpet player.

"When I think about what I

learned from him, it was more about being a part of his life than what he actually said,"

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"It's the interactions with students and finding out who you are and who you want to be and being apart of this wonderful enterprise of helping you launch yourself into your dreams."

David Maxwell  
12th Drake President

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Maxwell said. "I grew up in that environment where two of the most important things in the world were music and books and that was just a huge influence."

Maxwell then told stories of his trips to Russia, one time with his father's band. Instead of going to prom or graduation at the end of

his senior year, he went to Russia for seven weeks.

"It was the first time an American Jazz band had been behind the iron curtain," Maxwell said. "This was in 1962. It was a really unique, big deal. We were followed by media everywhere and we met Khrushchev. It was really a big deal."

The other was to write his dissertation, when he brought his wife, Maddy along.

"The Soviet Union in 1970 was not a really terrific place to live, but we had an amazing experience, it was a life changing experience," Maxwell said.

After sharing how his life had been transformed by these experiences, he described to the crowd what his worries are and what he cares about.

"The first list is probably going to be a little bit depressing, but it is not meant to be, it is meant to be a challenge to all those to do something about these things," Maxwell said.

Among the list were

environmental issues, factual issues, fundamentalism and intolerance.

"We live in a world where assertion and belief seem to opiate the same currency as knowledge and fact. We are dying science. We are denying demonstrable, provable fact," Maxwell said.

The speech then transition to question and answers.

First-year Dustin Eubanks asked the question of what Maxwell suggests students do to fix all of his concerns.

"I like to ask the tough questions, especially to those who might be able to answer them," Eubanks said. "In the same degree, he is a well-respected and well read man, so I wanted to hear his perspective, especially on concerns that a lot of people have. That is the best time to ask tough questions."

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