

Good Morning! What a beautiful day to be back at Hill Dining Hall, a place filled with many memories for me, and I am sure for you as well. My name is Paul Cushman, and I attended Berry Academy from 1973 – 1975.

It is my distinct honor and pleasure to introduce to you the recipient of this year's Berry Academy/High School Faculty/Staff Person of the Year 2011.

Dr. Richard Jackson Ingram is a native of Ashland, Alabama and graduated from Clay County High School. He served in the U. S. Navy aboard the Carrier U.S.S. Valley Forge (CVA-45) during the Korean War. He received his BS degree from Auburn University, and his Master's and Doctorate Degrees from the University of Georgia.

He is married to the lovely Margaret Ingram, and has two daughters, Cathy Halgat (husband Jay), and Joi Fox (husband Thomas), along with their son Lance Ingram and his wife Hannajon. The Ingrams have nine grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Doctor Ingram, or Dean Ingram, as he was affectionately known by the students and Administrators alike at Berry throughout the 1970s, came to Berry Academy in July 1970. He was initially Dean of Students, a position he held through 1972, when he was promoted to Headmaster of the Academy. He departed for a position at the college the summer of 1974, where he served the remainder of the decade.

The time he served at the Academy can best be defined as a time of change.

During that time we saw the election of Maynard Jackson, Atlanta's first black mayor and the continuation of the War in Vietnam and the escalation of the Cold War with the Soviet Union. The Watergate conspiracy dominated the news, eventually resulting in the resignation of a Vice President and a President.

Socially, America was rocked by Paul McCartney announcing the breakup of The Beatles and the deaths of Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin. We were stunned by the story and trial of Charles Manson. The voting age was dropped from 21 to 18 and the Draft was ended. OPEC implemented the first oil embargo, and the world was forever changed, it seemed, by the oil crisis.

Even in the isolation of the campus at Berry Academy, life in those times was no less stirred by changes. The military style hair standards gave way to long hair.

Speaking of change, it WASN'T "Mount Berry School for Boys" anymore. The students had their first exposure to cheerleaders at basketball games, the next year coeds on campus and then there were coed dorms. We converted from a semester system to quarters. A Middle School was founded.

Then, on February 21, 1972, for the second time in the school's history, we seemingly had lost our school to an inferno. The Torch Many worked throughout the night to try to save the school – alas, to no avail. The morning of February 22 found the students and faculty of Berry Academy at the depths of despair for their school and their futures. And when we most needed a consensus leader who could rally students, faculty, staff and community, despite the all-night vigil on the hill at the base of Lavender Mountain, Dean Ingram went to work. He led the effort, working tirelessly around the clock to develop a plan, to secure approvals and support from all stakeholders and to rally the resources needed to keep Berry Academy's mission and objectives viable.

From the pages of the 1973 Torch: “After the initial shock of the cataclysm, the ensuing events were remarkable. Almost to a man students, staff and faculty of the academy worked as one with help from Berry College to relocate in the first floor of senior dormitory Friendship Hall. Two days after the inferno, classes resumed almost as usual. Headmaster Richard J. Ingram deemed the cooperative regrouping a miracle. He stated, “A major building is temporarily lost, but the school is still very much alive. I have never been more privileged to work with a more resourceful and resilient student body and faculty.”

Through all these changes and challenges, Dean Ingram provided a stable balance in leadership that celebrated change and yet kept the mission of the school intact. A

quality education for all our students remained his paramount objective.

One of my favorite authors, Isaac Asimov, said, “It has been my philosophy of life that difficulties vanish when faced boldly.” I submit that it takes a special type of leader to be able to overcome such a crisis and yet still possess the kindness that endeared him to all.

We all know today, Berry Academy would eventually close its doors. But, on February 22, 1972, calamity was not going to take our school from us. Dean Ingram was committed to ensuring that, and the faculty, staff and students rallied at his side to keep that dream real.

Through myriad changes and this catastrophic event, it is clear that throughout his four years at Berry Academy, Dean Ingram demonstrated this same commitment to the school, his faculty, staff and students. And so today we honor him with this recognition of his service and leadership.

I am honored to present to you Dean Richard Ingram, the Berry Academy/High School Faculty/Staff Person of the Year for 2011.