

Helen Giles-Gee

Touts Rise from Race Segregation to College President

The sounds of drums and clapping rang out through the campus as Keene State College in Keene, New Hampshire as President Helen Giles-Gee walked into her inauguration.

"I cried on the way over here

so let me tell you I'm emotional," said Giles-Gee.

Upon the official appointment by the Board of Trustees, Giles-Gee reflected the miles she has come from Bessemer, Ala. to KSC.

As a child, Giles-Gee remembers having her face against the tiles of the bathroom floor during emergency drills in the age of Cold War America. Giles-Gee used her anecdote to signify the changes in the world over the past few decades.

Giles-Gee also spoke about the segregation dividing the South during the 1950s and 1960s. "Those were



My mother and father supported me and my four sisters with every ounce of their being...they created a vision of our future – that we would go to college and rise above the limits of segregation. They created a world of possibilities.

–Helen Giles-Gee

hard times for those who believed in social justice," said Giles-Gee. Seguing from the segregation in the South, Giles-Gee talked about the campus climate report and the conversations arising from the report.

Helen's professional career has

provided her with a variety of perspectives on higher education planning. She moved from Maryland to New York, assuming a role as dean of the School of Professional Studies at the State University of New York at Cortland. From 1991 until 1998, she served as associate vice chancellor for academic affairs and director of articulation for the University of Maryland System. She also served as executive assistant to the president and professor of biology at Towson State University and as chairperson and director of research of the Department of Biology at Cheyney University.