

## NEWSROOM

[Home](#) / [News](#) / [2023](#) / [August](#) / A Captain's Commitment

## A CAPTAIN'S COMMITMENT

## FRESHMEN SIGN HONOR CODE, BEGIN PROCESS OF DISCOVERING THEIR "WHY"

by [Kelley McGee](#) | August 18, 2023*Above: Ryan Terrell '27 signs the Honor Code.**Read time: about 2 min*

Freshman Ryan Terrell sat up front, right next to the Diamonstein Concert Hall stage. It was a prime seat you can only get by showing up an hour before the Honors Convocation begins. Signing the Honor Code is important to him, Terrell said, because he was attracted to a university whose values align with his own.

Here is the Honor Code that Terrell and more than 1,000 other freshmen pledged to uphold:

On my honor, I will maintain the highest standards of honesty, integrity and personal responsibility. This means I will not lie, cheat or steal, and as a member of this academic community, I am committed to creating an environment of respect and mutual trust.



"My high school had really similar expectations of being honest, kind and responsible for your own actions," Terrell said. "I think those shared values really bring out the best in everyone. I immediately noticed how friendly

everyone is here, how you can leave things around and not worry about anything being stolen, and how welcoming everyone is.”

The Community of Scholars Honor Convocation is more than just a welcome for the freshmen class; it's an introduction to the values that will define their time here at Christopher Newport.

“Mark Twain was quoted as saying, ‘The two most important days in your life are the day you are born, and the day you figure out why.’ Today we come together with our dedicated faculty to begin the process of helping you define your why,” said newly installed President William G. Kelly, who joined the incoming class in signing the honor code. “This is a serious, even solemn occasion because we are asking you to do serious work, to look inside yourself, to consider what matters to you, what you stand for, and to boldly define your commitment to something greater than yourself.”

“The morals and values instilled in you have guided you to your destiny to become a Captain at Christopher Newport University,” Board of Visitors Rector Lindsey Carney Smith, Esq. ‘01 told the class. “Discover who you are, learn and decide how you want to make a difference in our world. We know that you will achieve your goals without ever forgetting the core values within you that enable you to be here with us: selflessness, compassion, honor, truth, determination, and commitment to service.”

“I know you have learned the basic tenets about not lying, cheating, or stealing,” said Dr. Kevin Hughes, Vice-President of Student Affairs. “Our community of honor is more than that. It means you think not just about yourself, but about the common good. It means that you are committed to acting honorably in everything you do. It means you embrace the highest standards of honesty and integrity. It means you accept personal responsibility for all of your actions. It means you will create an environment grounded in trust of others and respect for them. It means that you have an obligation to help your fellow Captains, and anybody else that you know who needs extra care.”

Provost Quentin Kidd told the incoming class the ceremony is significant in that it symbolizes the beginning of their academic journey.

“Ceremony and ritual are important because they connect us deeply to one another and give us a feeling of belonging and purpose within a community,” he said. “They create unity instead of separation and help us understand the common thing we are striving for. That community you will join today - the common thing we are all a part of - is not just a community of scholarship but a community of honor, and this Honor Code Induction Ceremony is your first step into this community.”

After standing and reciting the Honor Code, all members of the class came forward and signed the Honor Code Registry. After, they were given a “lucky penny,” which they will hold until graduation day, when each senior tosses this penny into the fountain for good luck.

Following the ceremony, the freshmen took part in another cherished tradition: ringing the Clock Tower Bell. This class was in good company, as President Kelly also rang the bell for the first time.

“President Kelly seems like such a great guy,” Terrell said. “Coming from a military family, I connect with him. I understand where he's coming. He sets the bar high, which is great. I grew up with those same expectations. This is going to be a great four years.”