A colorful wall mural was unveiled in the campus game room during New Thorobred Week. Depicting various aspects of Kentucky State University, the mural includes an image of the KSU Thorobred mascot and Whitney M. Young Jr., who graduated from KSU in 1941 and later became known as a civil rights pioneer. A statue of Whitney Young (below) stands at the center of campus. Pictured to the left is Derek Patterson, who was chosen to paint the mural after entering a campus-wide student contest. The budding artist is a junior art major from Dayton, Ohio.

The students of Kentucky State University’s Class of 2017 received advice from administrators and a special guest on Aug. 16. They were initiated into the Thorobred community during the inaugural New Thorobred Convocation, which took place in Bradford Hall’s Carl H. Smith Auditorium.

“Tonight we begin a new tradition in the life of the university,” said Dr. Lorenzo Esters, vice president for student success and enrollment management. “Each year we will gather to celebrate the beginning of a new academic journey for new members of the Thorobred family.”

This year’s freshman class walked into the auditorium in a procession led by President Mary Evans Sias. Esters later asked the students to stand as he presented them to the president and entrusted their care to KSU’s faculty, staff and administrators.

“One of the greatest privileges I have is to serve at graduation time and to award diplomas,” Sias said. “So I can’t wait until 2017, when you will be walking across the stage, getting your degrees.”

The guest speaker, Colmon Elridge, a member of the governor’s senior staff, told the men and women of the new class that how they present themselves to the world is more important than the statistics that suggest they should not succeed and the low expectations that others may have of them.

Elridge remembered the elementary school teacher who accused his mother of doing his homework because the work was better than what the teacher expected from a poor 9-year-old whose family lived in either a motel or out of their car.

Elridge was appointed as executive assistant to Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear in December 2007 and was the youngest person on the senior staff at age 26. A student at Transylvania University in Lexington only about 10 years ago, Elridge said he was trying to match his aspirations with the tools necessary to achieve them.

“The question is what you choose to do with this moment,” he said.

Sias described the Class of 2017, which has about 670 students, as one of the best academically prepared classes to arrive at KSU in the past few years. The highest individual ACT score in the group is 34 out of 36, and the average composite ACT score is 19, Sias said. The average high school cumulative grade point average is 2.7. Seventy-nine students were in the top 10 percent at their high schools.
A Candle Lighting Ceremony welcoming Kentucky State University’s Class of 2017 began with a history lesson during the event held Aug. 16 at the amphitheater. The freshmen then lit candles to represent the university’s legacy.

Dr. Vernell Bennett, assistant vice president for diversity and inclusion, read KSU’s history from its beginning as a normal school for teachers in 1886 to the present. President Mary Evans Sias then entrusted several current KSU students with the Legacy Torch, which was passed to the Class of 2017 to continue the university’s heritage.

Sias ended the program by announcing that the students, all holding candles, were officially KSU Thorobreds.

Dr. Sias serves ice cream to students.

Students wore business attire to a reception hosted by President Mary Evans Sias during New Thorobred Week, Aug. 14-18. At the Thursday evening reception, incoming freshmen were treated to dessert and chatted with staff as well as each other.