

New president seeks to sharpen Cornell's focus on fields where it excels

# GARRETT STEPS UP



SIMON WHEELER / STAFF PHOTO  
Cornell University President Elizabeth Garrett delivers her inaugural address Friday morning on the Arts Quad in front of the the statue of Ezra Cornell. She is the first woman president of the university.

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When Cornell University's 13th president Elizabeth Garrett stepped to the podium Friday, it marked a new beginning as the university seeks to sharpen its focus. ♦ Garrett became the university's first female president during an inauguration ceremony held on the Arts Quad of the Ithaca campus beneath a blue sky and to the ringing of the clock tower bells. ♦ She reminded the audience of the mission of the university's founders, saying she hopes to emulate their idea of rebellion on the "ideas of convention" and approach the university's future with a similar spirit — this time with a more focused approach. See GARRETT, Page 7A

See a photo gallery and videos from Elizabeth Garrett's inauguration at [ithacajournal.com](http://ithacajournal.com).



MARK THIESSEN / NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC VIA AP  
Paleoartist John Gurche made this reconstruction of Homo naledi's face at his studio in Trumansburg.

## T-burg artist brings old face to life

Gurche crafts newly discovered Homo naledi

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An ancient face that was first seen around the world earlier this month was brought to life in Trumansburg. While the fossilized bones of Homo naledi were discovered in 2013 in a cave South Africa, it took John Gurche of Trumansburg to put a face on the major scientific find, which was presented Sept. 10 at a news conference in South Africa. The bones of Homo naledi, a previously unknown human ancestor, of unknown age, were discovered by cave explorers about 30 miles northwest of Johannesburg. They were brought to the attention of Lee Berger, a professor at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. With support from the National Geographic Society, Berger directed the removal of the bones from the tight cave. As Gurche relates, National Geographic told Berger in spring 2014 they would send someone out to make an impression of how Homo naledi looked from the bones. "They basically called him and said 'We're sending out a guy,' and he said 'Oh no you're not; I'm going to get John Gurche to do that,'" said Gurche. "I was very honored to be chosen to figure out what this guy looked like." National Geographic sent Gurche to South Africa twice in 2014, to study the bones and to figure out a scientific basis for reconstructing this new species of human. "Lee is very generous about letting people study this stuff ... not everyone is like that," said Gurche. Gurche would end up with a plastic skull cast as the base for him to create the lifelike reconstruction of Homo naledi. But Gurche notes the cast, made from a three-dimensional scan as the bones are too fragile to make a cast from directly, couldn't capture all the fine details and interior volumes such as the inside of the nasal cavity. So, during his two trips, he had to pack in

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"Since I've never seen this creature before, it's a surprise, even to me, (the) end product. It's almost like a mystery story where an identity is slowly revealed."

JOHN GURCHE

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