Dean Keathley: President Smith, our distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, in 1950 Middle Tennessee State College in cooperation with the federal government and the state board of education, added the Department of Military Science and Tactics to its organization. The objectives of the department, perhaps better known as the ROTC department, are 1) to develop the qualities of leadership required in both military and civil enterprises; 2) to impart specialized knowledge and skills; and 3) to offer a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the organized reserves corps to the graduate, and to a selected few, a commission as Second Lieutenant in the Regular Army.

The Department of Military Science and Tactics was first housed in less than adequate quarters on the first floor of the Alumni Memorial Gymnasium. At the beginning of the Fall quarter, 1954, the State Board of Education, on behalf of Middle Tennessee State College, accepted from the contractor a splendid building wherein the Department of Military Science and Tactics is housed today. It is this building we dedicate. Located in the northeastern section of the campus instructional area, it is one of the finest ROTC facilities in Tennessee. Inspecting officers from Third Army Headquarters, Atlanta have repeatedly stated that this building is the best for its intended purposes of any in the Third Army Area.

As we dedicate the several buildings on this college campus, it is fitting that each should be named. There was no search made for a name for the ROTC building. The name was simply present and at hand. The spirit of the man for whom the building is named resides on our campus. On July 13, 1821 Nathan Bedford Forrest was born near Chapel Hill, Tennessee not far from Murfreesboro. During the great War Between the States, Nathan Bedford Forrest rose to heights of leadership, generalship, and fame that have not been eclipsed. The exploits stemming from his military genius have been told and retold over all the hearthstones of Middle Tennessee. The military leadership of our nation looks to his career today for inspiration and knowledge. The heads of European armies have long studied his campaigns and maneuvers because no man since has excelled the great Southern raider. On this occasion, we dedicate a mundane portion of our college to its ultimate mission. In the true concept of education, physical stone and brick combine to render possible the ideals of learning and service. It is in this spirit that we dedicate to its highest and best uses as an important facility of Middle Tennessee State College, the Nathan Bedford Forrest Hall.

[Applause from audience]