The Weather Channel Meteorologist Vivian Brown gave the keynote address during Jackson State University’s Founders’ Day Convocation on Oct. 24. JSU President Carolyn W. Meyers opened The Founders’ Day Convocation with greetings to students, faculty, staff and alumni and friends. “Today we celebrate the stories of Jackson State University from her founding in 1877, 136 years ago, until today,” Meyers said. “We celebrate our freedom to imagine and experience. Today we pause in honor and respect all of the courage, commitment, character and creativity of our faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends who have defined Jackson State University.”

Following an introduction by Dr. Wilbur Walters, Associate Dean of the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology, Ms. Brown began her speech with a recollection of her experiences as an undergraduate student at JSU. “All I can say is wow,” Brown remarked. “What a long way we’ve come! Look at all the new buildings and the renovations of the old ones.” Brown went on to talk about her matriculation through the university. She credited Jackson State for her personal development that led to her success in life. “Jackson State has also prepared me with the confidence of knowing that I am prepared for any additional challenges that life has to offer,” says Brown.

Brown, a 1986 JSU graduate, joined The Weather Channel soon after graduation. While at JSU, she received a full-athletic scholarship in track and field and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in meteorology. As a meteorologist for The Weather Channel, Brown has covered major weather events, such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the April 2011 tornado outbreak in Tuscaloosa, Ala., and most recently, Super Storm Sandy.

The convocation followed a week of activities related to the annual observance of JSU’s history. Other events included a book reading, panel discussions and a reception. “Each year, we look forward to Founders’ Day because it allows us to reflect on JSU’s rich history and amazing progress and growth over the years,” said Dr. Marie O’Banner-Jackson, chair of the Founders’ Day Committee.

The institution that would become known as Jackson State University was founded in 1877 as the Natchez Seminary, a private church school established in Natchez under the auspices of the American Baptist Home Mission Society of New York. The seminary educated newly freed African Americans as ministers and teachers. In 1882, the society moved the school to Jackson, Miss., and it was renamed Jackson College. The college was under state control by 1940. Through a 1974 legislative act, the college became Jackson State University. Five years later, the Institutions of Higher Learning officially designated JSU Mississippi’s Urban University.