



NEW JERSEY

Association of State Colleges and Universities

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QuickTakes!

Dr. Henry Pruitt, Jr., Serving on William Paterson University Board for 33 Years, Retires and is Named Trustee Emeritus

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Dr. Henry J. Pruitt, Jr., who is retiring from the William Paterson University Board of Trustees after 33 years of service, has been named trustee emeritus by the board. He is the longest-serving board member in the University's modern history.

Dr. Pruitt, who joined the William Paterson board in 1983, has served in numerous leadership roles, including chair of the board from 1991 to 1993, and chair of several key committees, including the Educational Policy and Student Development Committee, the Finance and Audit Committee, the Minority Affairs Committee, and the Personnel and Compensation Committee. Beyond the University, Dr. Pruitt served as chairman of the board of the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities (NJASCU), the agency that advocates on behalf of public higher education in New Jersey.

"I leave this college in good hands and I am confident that any issues of concern that might arise will be handled efficiently and effectively," said Dr. Pruitt. "I wish William Paterson University the best and I will be watching as this institution continues to prosper in the future."

"I have had the privilege of working with Dr. Pruitt on various education issues for many years and want to personally and professionally recognize his decades of service in helping to advance educational opportunities for all," says Rochelle Hendricks, New Jersey secretary of higher education.

Fred Gruel, chair of the William Paterson University Board of Trustees, has served with Dr. Pruitt for 27 years. "Henry Pruitt is a dedicated public servant who has been an integral part of the governance of William Paterson University for 33 years," he said. "He has provided guidance for the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities (NJASCU), including its chairmanship, and has maintained an active role in higher education in New Jersey. His fellow Trustees and I will miss his wisdom and good counsel."

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“Henry Pruitt’s commitment to William Paterson University, and to the students of New Jersey, is laudatory and speaks to his unfailing dedication to learning as a lifelong educator,” says President Kathleen Waldron. “We are a better institution because of him. The faculty, students, and administration thank him for his service, and wish him well in his future pursuits.”

Michael Klein, as executive director of NJASCU, also paid tribute to Dr. Pruitt. “Dr. Pruitt has provided William Paterson University, the association, and the State of New Jersey with thoughtful, passionate, and insightful leadership that contributed immeasurably to public policies helping the people of the State of New Jersey gain access to affordable, high-quality college education.”

A tireless advocate for students, and especially students of color, Dr. Pruitt focused on the intellectual, cultural, and personal merits of diversity and led William Paterson University to achieve one of the most diverse student bodies in the state and region as well as a diverse faculty and staff. During his tenure on the William Paterson University board of Trustees, Dr. Pruitt oversaw the significant expansion of the institution’s student body, growth in the number of faculty to more than 400, the creation of a residential campus, the construction of major new facilities, including the academic buildings University Hall, Power Arts Center, and Science West; the John Victor Machuga Student Center and University Commons; multiple residence halls; the acquisition of the Valley Road campus; and construction of a parking garage.

His service to higher education extended beyond the University as he served as chair of the NJASCU from 2001 to 2003, and vice chair from 2000 to 2001.

A career educator, Dr. Pruitt spent more than three decades as a junior high school teacher, assistant principal and principal, including 22 years as principal of Janis E. Dismus Middle School in Englewood. A resident of Teaneck, where he is an elected councilman and deputy mayor, he has served as president of the Teaneck Board of Education, president of the Teaneck Community Relations Advisory Board, member of the Teaneck Visioning Task Force, and member of the Teaneck Parks and Recreation Board, among numerous other professional and community activities. He has received numerous honors and awards for his commitment to education and service. Dr. Pruitt holds a doctorate in education from Teachers College, Columbia University, where he majored in education finance.