John Land Retires from DSU Board; Named Trustee Emeritus

Posted: March 3, 2011

The DSU Board of Trustees today voted to name Dr. John W. Land as Trustee Emeritus following the announcement that he is stepping down from his appointed board post, bringing to a close his 19-year tenure as a voting member.

Dr. John Land (center) shows the Board's resolution with David Turner (l), Board vice chair and Dr. Claibourne Smith, Board chair.

A class of 1966 alumnus of then-Delaware State College and a board-appointed trustee member since 1992, Dr. Land served as board vice president from 2004-2008 and returned to that office in 2010 until September of that year. He has served as the chair of the board's Student Affairs Committee, as well as a member of the Building and Grounds (of which he is a former chair), Finance and Audit committees.

Dr. Claibourne D. Smith, board president, said that the trustees have been proud to have a distinguished graduate and community leader such as Dr. Land to serve on the board.

"Dr. Land has been active, not only as a Trustee and member of several key committees, but as the Board's vice chair as well," Dr. Smith said. "He has been instrumental in developing the board's vision, strategic directions and policies. I could not have had a more vital partner than Dr. Land in providing leadership for the board and the University."

DSU President Harry L. Williams said Dr. Land has been a strong voice on the board. "Dr. Land has been a real inspirational leader for his beloved Delaware State University," Dr. Williams said. "His wisdom and candid responses to questions will truly be missed."

Dr. Land was moved by the resolution that named him Trustee Emeritus. "I owe DSU more than I could ever give it," he said. "If it wasn't for DSU, I wouldn't be here."

In the wake of the August 2008 resignation of DSU President Allen Sessoms and the subsequent elevation of Dr. Smith from his board chair post to acting president, Dr. Land became the acting chair of the board and served 17 months in that capacity until Dr. Smith resumed his Board leadership role.

Dr. A. Richard Barros said he considers Dr. Land in the highest esteem. “When it comes to representing Delaware State University, John Land has been the ultimate warrior,” he said. “His work with our Student Affairs Committee and his tenure as our Board’s vice president and acting president has enabled our school to rise to the top.”

For 19 years, Dr. Lands established a reputation as a committed and engaged trustees for the betterment of his alma mater DSU.

Dr. Land’s DSU roots go back to the mid-1960s when he was enrolled as a student. During those years, he played as a running back on the Hornet football team and became the team captain his senior year. A powerful running back, Dr. Land climaxed his Hornet career by gaining 600 yards on the ground and scoring seven touchdowns during that final year.

After he completed his Bachelor of Science Degree in Health and Physical Education in 1966, Dr. Land was drafted into the NAFL where he played with the Wilmington Clippers. He ascended to the NFL where he played for the Baltimore Colts (1969) and the Philadelphia Eagles (1970). He ended his 10-year football career with the Philadelphia Bell of the WFL (1973-75), where in 1974 he became the first African American to rush for 1,000 yards in the city of Philadelphia.

Dr. Land was inducted in the DSU Athletics Hall of Fame in 1988 and in the Delaware Sports Museum and Hall of Fame in 1997.

A committed alumnus of his alma mater, Dr. Land has supported the institution with his leadership skill and his enthusiastic support. Dr. Land also sets an example for alumni in his financial support of DSU as a long time President’s Club-level contributor. He chaired the Delmarva Scholarship Golf Classic for over 10 years, an event that has raised over $356,000 in scholarships for DSU students.

Dr. John Land credits DSU for bringing him together with his wife (l), and he credits his wife and family with being instrumental in making him a successful man.

On Sept. 13, 2005, DSU presented him with an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters in recognition of his unselfish and dedicated service to the institution.

Dr. Land taught in Delaware for 10 years before moving into the business arena. After working for the Xerox Corporation in sales, he later joined Delmarva Power, where he eventually served as the vice president of Procurement and Corporate Services up until his retirement in 2005.

Active in volunteer activities, Dr. Land has served on the boards of the Charter School of Wilmington, LPGA Urban Youth Golf Advisory Board, Junior Achievement, Brandywine YMCA, and Alliance for Children and Families, among others. In 2004, Children and Family First presented Dr. Land with the J. Thompson Brown Award to recognize his accomplishments as a community volunteer.

Source URL: http://www.desu.edu/news/john-land-retires-dsu-board-named-trustee-emeritus#comment-0