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CURRAN PLEDGES TO "CARRY ON LEGACY" OF COMMUNITY SERVICE, FORMAL INSTALLATION AS UD'S 18TH PRESIDENT ON APRIL 11

DAYTON, Ohio—During the University of Dayton’s spring break, new president Daniel J. Curran embarked on a nearly 2,000-mile road trip.

He visited UD students who gave up a week on the beach to work on a farm in Spencer, W. Va., that grows food for homeless shelters in Washington, D.C. He enjoyed a meal on the porch with students in the Appalachian community of Salyersville, Ky., where UD has run a summer service program for nearly four decades. In Washington, D.C., he talked with students lobbying lawmakers to stop funding an organization formerly known as the School of the Americas. Critics accuse its graduates of human rights abuses in Latin America. In Trenton, N.J., he spent time with students at an inner-city ministry, where they rehabbed a house and tutored.

“We’re moving students beyond simply doing service for service’s sake. A lot of students are thinking about policy issues,” he said. “It’s very important for students to get into a soup kitchen or a homeless shelter, but, through reflection in and out of classrooms, we’re having our students think about long-term policy issues to address these problems.”

A sociologist, Curran believes a Catholic university “must be a social force for change,” that it should “analyze the causes of social injustice and educate professionals with a conscience.” His own research focuses on ways to address social inequality. As he prepares to be formally installed as UD’s 18th president on Friday, April 11, the 52-year-old Philadelphia native will reaffirm the Marianist university’s commitment to civic engagement and social justice in a 3 p.m. ceremony and address in the Thomas J. Frericks Convocation Center. No reservations are needed.

When Curran was appointed president last February, people quickly noticed his infectious energy, his quick smile and unpretentious nature. Those first impressions have lasted. “He’s very accessible, approachable, a genuine leader and a great guy,” said Sarah Grover, president of the Student Government Association and a senior international business and Spanish major from Carmel, Ind. “He’s passionate about his job and the students. I can’t say enough good things about him. From a student standpoint, he’s a great fit.”

Joseph Saliba, president of the Academic Senate, appreciates Curran’s demeanor. “I like
his vision for the University of Dayton and his sense of calmness,” said Saliba, professor of civil and environmental engineering and engineering mechanics. “He’s a consensus builder who can delegate but still has his hand on the pulse of the University. He’s been very available to both faculty and students.”

Curran has been visible in the Dayton community and with alumni around the country. “Every place I go in Dayton I see him,” said Richard Finan, chair of UD’s board of trustees and former president of the Ohio Senate. “He’s a very caring person, who’s very attuned to the needs of the students.”

Vicki Giambrone, president-elect of the National Alumni Association, noticed how he quickly reached out to alumni. “We met him when he first came in. He felt as deeply for the University and its mission as we did,” said Giambrone, vice president of marketing and development for Children’s Medical Center. “His passion and energy are contagious. The feedback from alumni in New York to Cincinnati is the same. He’s approachable. He values us as part of the University of Dayton community.”

Brother Stephen Glodek, S.M., provincial of the Marianist province for the United States and UD trustee, is impressed with Curran’s vision, “deep respect for what he has inherited in terms of tradition” and his commitment to continuing UD’s role in the Dayton community.

For his part, Curran said he’s just stepping into the footprints of his predecessors.

“I’m intrigued by Father Leo Meyer, one of the first Marianists who came to the United States,” said Curran, UD’s first lay president. “In his first days in Dayton, the Dayton community was faced with a cholera epidemic. He immediately went out into the community and built relationships, setting the pattern for us today. From Father Leo Meyer to Brother Ray Fitz, it’s always the same. UD can and will contribute to the community. Ray was always out in the community dealing with issues of justice and conscience — and still is. I’m carrying on a legacy.”

Curran has quickly immersed himself in the region, focusing on economic development issues. He serves on the Dayton Development Coalition, the executive committee of the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce and the Ohio Aerospace and Defense Advisory Council.

A video will highlight how UD’s presidents throughout history have partnered with the Dayton community — from sheltering residents during the 1913 flood to taking steps to protect children and families. Curran will close his address with “a pledge and challenge for the UD community to be even more involved — locally and globally.”

Curran’s installation will culminate on Saturday, April 12, with “Community Day,” featuring a snapshot of events illustrating UD’s connection to the community. Organizers have tagged the event as “Dan Curran’s Top Ten Things to Do on Saturday to Build Community.”

For assistance in scheduling interviews, contact Teri Rizvi at (937) 229-3241 or rizvi@udayton.edu. A complete schedule of installation activities is attached.