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Distinguished Leader

University of Dayton

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The University of Dayton today welcomed Eric F. Spina the 19th president of the University and the second lay leader in its 165-year history.
Spina (spé na), who has served Syracuse University for 27 years, including nine as vice chancellor and provost, was selected unanimously by the University of Dayton's Board of Trustees. He will succeed Daniel J. Curran, president since 2002, who will step down in June 2016 after presiding over an era of unprecedented growth.

"I have learned about the University's Marianist values and the deep commitment to social justice and community engagement here. I found that these values are my values, these priorities are my priorities," Spina said. "In a way, I feel that I am coming home."

"I have been tremendously impressed by the quality of the faculty, staff and students, and have felt from the beginning the strong and inclusive sense of community for which the University of Dayton is renowned," he added.

In making the announcement, Steve Cobb, chairman of the University's board of trustees, said Spina is a nationally recognized leader in higher education, with a career marked by excellence in academic leadership, teaching, research and community engagement and a warm, engaging personal style.

"He is a good listener, a good learner and his style aligns with who we are and what we are," Cobb said. "In all that he's done, we saw a servant-leader guided by his values and dedicated to serving others with his experience and knowledge. I know without question he is the right fit for the University."

Spina, a Roman Catholic, said the mission of the University aligns with the personal values he learned from his parents — both teachers — and in 12 years of Catholic education, including four years at Canisius High School, in Buffalo, New York.

The Rev. Martin Solma, S.M., provincial for the Marianist Province of the United States said, "From my first meeting with Eric, he impressed me as a smart, engaging, collaborative and respectful leader. His genuineness, integrity and sense of inclusiveness were quite impressive. These are just the qualities we value in the president of this Catholic and Marianist university. He will build on a strong foundation of the past three presidents, all for the good of our mission."

Curran assured Spina and his family of the support of the campus community.

"The warmth of the welcome today is just a preview of how this campus will embrace you," he said. "You will soon find that the entire University community is committed to your success and will help you in countless ways. On behalf of that community, I welcome you to the Flyer family."

Spina joined the Syracuse faculty in 1988 as an assistant professor and rose through the ranks as
department chair, dean, and vice chancellor and provost, the university's chief academic officer. He also briefly served as interim chancellor and president in 2013.

He earned his doctorate and master's degree from Princeton University in mechanical and aerospace engineering. A prolific researcher and author with a 20-year research focus on experimental high-speed fluid mechanics, he has worked on multi-million dollar grants from NASA, the National Science Foundation and the Environmental Protection Agency. He holds two U.S. patents and authored, co-authored or edited dozens of academic publications.

For more information, contact Shawn Robinson, associate director of media relations, at 937-229-3391 or srobinson@udayton.edu.