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BOARD OF TRUSTEES RE-APPOINTS FITZ TO FOURTH TERM AS PRESIDENT

DAYTON, Ohio -- The University of Dayton board of trustees today re-appointed Brother Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., to a fourth five-year term as president of Ohio’s largest private university and one of the nation’s largest Catholic universities.

Fitz’s tenure represents stability in an era when much of private higher education is facing turbulent times. It also represents longevity: The average college president typically serves seven years, with only slightly less than 10 percent ever serving more than 15, according to a 1993 report by the American Council on Education.

Colleagues, trustees and community leaders say the University of Dayton has moved up a notch in prominence under Fitz’s leadership, which has been characterized by attention to strategic planning and a "think big, start small" philosophy.

"The strong consensus is that the University of Dayton has moved in the right direction," said Terry Carder, chair of UD’s board of trustees who appointed a committee of community and campus representatives to evaluate Fitz’s leadership. "We gave him a solid A--that’s based on all As and a couple of A pluses. He was rated well above expectation in every category, especially in contributions made outside the University. He was generally rated very highly as a humanitarian."

Half of UD’s nearly 70,000 alumni have received their diplomas from Fitz. During his tenure, the University of Dayton has experienced remarkable growth. The annual operating budget has more than tripled, from $51 million to more than $180 million. Sponsored research has ballooned from $17 million to $45 million, making UD one of the top research universities in the state and a leader among Catholic universities. The endowment...
has grown more than tenfold, from just under $8 million to more than $89 million. The average college-entrance test scores are at a record high. The number of faculty has increased by 20 percent, with 85 percent (compared to 62 percent in 1979) holding either a doctorate or the highest degree in their field.

In the last five years, a number of achievements have captured the headlines:

• development and implementation of a mandatory humanities-based general education curriculum;

• launching of Ph.D. programs in educational leadership and electro-optics, doubling the number of doctoral programs;

• enrollment of more National Merit Scholars in the first-year class than any other Catholic university in the country;

• accreditation from the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business at both the undergraduate and graduate level for the School of Business Administration, a distinction only about 20 percent of the nation’s business schools enjoy;

• solicitation of the two largest gifts in UD’s history: a $5 million hand-written check from an anonymous donor for the School of Law and a $5 million commitment to support the humanities from philanthropist Jesse Philips;

• decision to join the Great Midwest Conference to increase exposure for UD’s athletics program;

• completion of more than $40 million worth of construction, including the new Jesse Philips Humanities Center, reconstruction of fire-damaged St. Joseph Hall, transformation of the former Children’s Psychiatric Hospital into Shroyer Park Center, an addition to the Virginia W. Kettering Residence Hall, an expansion of the Fieldhouse, now known as the Thomas J. Frericks Athletics and Convocation Center, and the first student duplex, a prototype for future construction in the student neighborhood. In addition, the University aggressively purchased and began renovation of rental properties in the student neighborhood, increasing ownership from one-third to about 75 percent of the houses;

• development of several community collaborations, including the AIM "teaching factory" with Sinclair Community College, the five-year UD-Wright State University basketball series and the proposed Dayton Area Graduate Studies Institute initiative; and

• stepped-up involvement in the community, including leading a team of business
leaders to evaluate the Dayton Public Schools' levy request, chairing the Child Protection Task Force established by Montgomery County Commissioner Donna Moon, working to establish the Greater Dayton Roundtable—a community forum to address the needs of children and families and improve race relations—and launching the city's first annual race relations survey.

These accomplishments have been achieved despite personal and professional adversity. In 1989, doctors diagnosed Fitz with multiple sclerosis, a non-fatal disease of the central nervous system. In the fall, Fitz announced at least a $1.6 million budget cut for fiscal year 1995, driven by a downturn in undergraduate enrollment because of a shrinking pool of college-age students and the need to contain the costs of delivering education while improving programs. Even in troubled times, the campus community has not lost confidence in Fitz's leadership.

"I believe he is very well respected by almost all the faculty—an extraordinary achievement given the financial and political challenges of private higher education in recent years," noted the Rev. James L. Heft, S.M., provost.

"He has been so instrumental in the development of the University over the past 15 years that many faculty cannot conceive of the University without his leadership," said Patrick Palermo, associate provost for undergraduate education. "He sets a tone of civility which allows the University community to consider and debate its mission, goals and policies in an atmosphere of mutual respect and collaboration."

Faculty members agree. "He's a good decision maker in that he is decisive but at the same time consultative and open. He never seems to force decisions to be quickly made," said James Dunne, vice president of the Academic Senate and professor of management information systems and decision sciences. "Under his leadership, UD has faced minimal disruption over the past three or four years of downturn in higher education. We have, in fact, made significant improvements in faculty and facility over those years."

Judith Allik, a professor of psychology, sat on Carder's evaluation committee. "His planning and foresight are tremendous strengths. Because he is so highly respected in that area, the faculty have confidence, even in times of difficulty, that he is doing an extremely..."
competent job."

Outside the University of Dayton, people admire Fitz for the same characteristic that makes him a strong president: his ability, rooted solidly in the Marianist spirit of building community, to encourage people with different opinions to work together to solve problems.

Invited to the Vatican in 1989 to serve as one of 18 American delegates to draft an apostolic constitution on Catholic universities, Fitz is now involved in the implementation as one of six president consultors for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Recently, he wrote a position paper on dispute resolution between bishops and Catholic college presidents.

"He's an example of a president who listens well," said the Rev. Edward "Monk" Malloy, president of the University of Notre Dame who sits on the committee with Fitz. "He's very steady and consistent in his approach."

"In my mind, he's been a quiet but persevering supporter and defender of Catholic higher education," said Ursuline Sister Alice Gallin, interim president at Saint Bonaventure University and former executive director of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities. "One of his distinguishing characteristics is that he has the wisdom and sensitivity to be able to reconcile opposing views. He's a peacemaker."

James Williams, superintendent of Dayton Public Schools, calls Fitz "a scholar, facilitator, mediator and a gentleman." On a scale of 0 to 100, "we could go to 150, based on the respect he has in this community."

Donna B. Moon, president of the Montgomery County Commission, asked Fitz last year to chair the Child Protection Task Force because "he truly believes in service, and he is not afraid to tackle tough problems." David H. Ponitz, president of Sinclair Community College, considers Fitz both "a personal and professional friend who has given of his talents in an untiring manner for the benefit of this community. On dozens of occasions, he has melded diverse groups together for positive action and community development. He is equally adept at blending differences of opinion into consensus and has been a catalyst for making this a better place in which to live."

Fitz, an Akron native and 1964 UD alumnus, has spent half of his life serving his alma mater. Before becoming UD's 17th president in 1979, he spent a decade in a variety of University positions, ranging from a faculty member in the School of Engineering to the executive director of the Center for Christian Renewal. His next five-year term begins in May.

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University of Dayton Growth During Fitz Tenure

Dollars: (in millions)

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<th>Year</th>
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Areas of growth: Annual Operating Budget, Sponsored Research, Endowment