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Dr. Constantine Papadakis, Preeminent Educator and Distinguished Member of Leadership 100, Dies



PHILADELPHIA - Constantine Papadakis, the Drexel University president who is credited with raising the endowment, enrollment and profile of the one-time commuter school, died of complications from lung cancer. He was 63 and was a prominent member of Leadership 100.

Papadakis led the private Philadelphia university like a business and made no apologies for it, adding programs and even considering a second campus clear across the country. Called "Taki" by students and friends, he was known for his smiling, gregarious personality.

Stephen G. Yeonas, Chairman of Leadership 100, said on hearing of the news: "Taki Papadakis' legacy in advancing education and Hellenic ideals will live on and influence the lives of many of our young people and our society. To him, education was the most important gift we could give our children and he encouraged our youth to be diligent in their studies and to strive for perfection. His genuine warmth, love and support for all humankind are the greatest gifts he leaves behind. Leadership 100, the academic world and our nation have lost a great leader."

An innovator in higher education with extensive experience in both academe and the corporate world, he has been President of Drexel since 1995. Since then, Dr. Papadakis has used the historic strengths of the University (cooperative education, Drexel's focus on technology and the rich resources of its Philadelphia location) to increase full-time undergraduate enrollment from 4,500 in 1996 to more than 11,000 today. Drexel now educates a headcount of 21,000 students, is the sixth-largest employer in Philadelphia, employing 8,100 people, and has an annual budget of more than \$650 million. Under his leadership, the school acquired schools of medicine, nursing and public health, and in 2006 started its own law school. Papadakis also oversaw the construction of numerous buildings on campus.

The university has begun putting down roots for a possible second campus in Northern California. It started offering master's degree programs in Sacramento in January and received approval from local officials to build a campus in nearby Placer County.

Before coming to Drexel, Papadakis was the dean of engineering at the University of Cincinnati.

Papadakis received his undergraduate degree in civil engineering from the National Technical University in Greece. He held a master's degree in civil engineering from the University of Cincinnati and a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan.

Papadakis also once headed the civil engineering department at Colorado State University and was vice president of Tetra Tech Inc., a Honeywell subsidiary, before joining Cincinnati. Dr. Papadakis joined Bechtel Power Company in 1974, where he served in several engineering positions. He was author or co-author of 80 articles and technical publications.

Papadakis served as a member of the Business Higher Education Forum and the Council on Competitiveness. He also served on the board of directors of the National Commission for Cooperative Education and the World Trade Center of Greater Philadelphia. He was a member of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee, the Board of Directors of the Opera Company of Philadelphia, the Hellenic College/Holy Cross Board of Trustees, and the Judicial Council of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. The recipient of numerous awards and honors here and abroad, he was inducted into the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle as Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

He is survived by his wife, Eliana, daughter, Maria and relatives in Greece and the US.

The funeral service will be held on Tuesday, April 14 at noon at the St. Luke Greek Orthodox Church (35 North Malin Road, Broomall, PA – 610-353-1592). In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to the “Constantine Papadakis Fund at Drexel University.” Drexel University, 3141 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104.