

New Directions

Volume 17 | Issue 2

Article 1

4-1-1990

notes

Editorial Staff

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Recommended Citation

Staff, Editorial (1990) "notes," *New Directions*: Vol. 17: Iss. 2, Article 1.

Available at: <https://dh.howard.edu/newdirections/vol17/iss2/1>

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From the Editors Notebook

CARLTON P. ALEXIS



This month marks two important milestones for Howard University: The arrival of a new president, and the retirement of Interim President Carlton P. Alexis, M.D.

As one period concludes and another begins, the lessons of the past and the promise of the future speak well for the university under a new leadership and administration.

The contributions of Alexis as interim president since last July and, before that, as executive vice president and as vice president for health affairs in the 20-year administration of James E. Cheek,

have been enduring and commendable. So, too, have been his long years of service in the medical field since he first joined Howard's College of Medicine faculty in 1964.

For his exemplary record and his loyalty to the institution from which he earned his medical degree in 1957, the university's Board of Trustees voted in January to give him the title of President Emeritus upon his retirement at the end of March. And on March 1, at the Charter Day Dinner, came a surprise citation. It was presented by Harry D. Garber, vice chair of the Board of Trustees. It said, in part:

CARLTON PETER ALEXIS, you have served Howard University with devotion, with competence, and with inspiration.

Throughout your long years of service as a physician, as a teacher and as an administrator, you have consistently evinced strength of conviction, calmness of spirit, patience and courage in adversity, and equanimity under all conditions . . .

When the history of this time at Howard University is finally written, your legacy will surely shine forth. You have set a good course and you have raised a standard to which we can repair . . .

On March 2, at the Charter Day Convocation, Alexis gave his public farewell to the university community. He said:

"This occasion, which marks the 123rd anniversary of the founding of our university, has an extra dimension of meaning for me, since it marks both the beginning of a new year in the continuing rich and diverse life of Howard, and it also marks the concluding of my tenure as the interim president of Howard University . . .

"To the Board of Trustees, I thank you for tolerating me; to the faculty, I thank you for educating me; to the students, I thank you for listening to me; to my family, I thank you for supporting me; and to my friends, I thank you for praying for me."

We wish Carlton Alexis and his family well.

As for Howard's new president — Franklyn G. Jenifer, Ph.D. — his journey just begins. And the Howard community anticipates with great optimism that he will make a positive difference as he embarks on his tough mission to move Howard forward. Jenifer, a Howard graduate, is an educator/administrator who built his career outside the Washington area. But he has been by no means detached from Howard or the city of his birth — Washington, D.C. He makes history by virtue of being the first graduate of Howard to become its president.

Again, congratulation is in order — mindful of the fact it had already been extended to him in this space in January.

For more on Howard's new president, his personality, his leadership style, and more, staff writer Harriet Jackson Scarupa has written a long profile which appears in this issue. Her efforts are the results of days of face-to-face interviews with Jenifer in Boston, and with others who have worked with him and who know him well. □

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