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LIBERTY UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPOINTS CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT

Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Dondi E. Costin, Ph.D., selected as sixth President along with Pastor Jonathan Falwell as third Chancellor

LYNCHBURG, Va., March 31, 2023 – During the spring meeting of the Board of Trustees of Liberty University, the trustees unanimously appointed Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Dondi E. Costin, Ph.D., the sixth president of the University and Pastor Jonathan Falwell the third chancellor of the University. Both leaders will assume their duties ahead of the 2023-24 school year.

“As one whose life and ministry have been profoundly shaped by Liberty University, I can think of no educational institution with more global impact than my two-time alma mater. I am beyond grateful to the Board for entrusting me with this extraordinary opportunity,” said President designee Costin. “Vickey and I look forward to locking arms with the Liberty family as we honor the University’s past and drive toward its future. With God’s help and for His glory, the very best days of our great University are still ahead of us.”

Chancellor designee Falwell added, “With this transition we are recommitting our institution to its founding, and singular, mission: *Training Champions for Christ*. I look forward to serving alongside our exceptionally qualified new president to impact more lives than ever before with Christ-centered education.” Like his father before him, Falwell will remain as Senior Pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church while also serving at Liberty University.



Dr. Dondi E. Costin

As President of Liberty University, Dr. Costin comes to the university’s leadership as a continuation of a lifetime dedicated to service. Most recently, Dr. Costin has served as president of Charleston Southern University (CSU). His celebrated tenure has been marked by academic and athletic achievement. Costin oversaw the construction of several new facilities and the substantial expansion

of CSU's academic programs, including South Carolina's only four-year aviation program, multiple doctoral programs, and an engineering program within the university's College of Science and Mathematics. Under his leadership, the university set fundraising records, significantly improved its overall rankings, and dramatically exceeded freshmen enrollment goals. On the heels of the best all-around year in CSU's athletic history, Dr. Costin now serves as president of the Big South Conference. Despite operating in a #1 tourist town with a top national port, the only Boeing plant outside the State of Washington, manufacturing plants for Mercedes and Volvo, three major universities, and countless successful businesses in every industry, CSU was named the 2022 *Business of the Year* by the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce.

Prior to Charleston Southern University, Dr. Costin obtained the rank of Major General with the U.S. Air Force during 32 years of commissioned service, during which he represented the Liberty Baptist Fellowship as an endorsed chaplain. He completed his military career at the Pentagon as Air Force Chief of Chaplains. As Chief of Chaplains, he served as senior pastor to more than 664,000 active-duty, Guard, Reserve and civilian forces in the United States and overseas, and he led 2,000 chaplains and chaplain assistants from the Air Force Chaplain Corps. A decorated combat veteran, Costin deployed in support of numerous contingency and humanitarian relief operations across the globe and previously served as senior chaplain for Air Force operations in both the Pacific and the Middle East. His military decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, and the Bronze Star Medal. In addition to a bachelor's degree in operations research from The United States Air Force Academy, Dr. Costin holds five master's degrees, a Doctor of Ministry degree, and a Ph.D. in organizational leadership. He earned two of his five master's degrees from Liberty University early in his military career. He has been married to Vickey for more than 33 years. Mrs. Costin's own legacy of public service includes 23 years as a public-school educator.

The appointments by the trustees come after an extensive national search was conducted on behalf of the University's Presidential and Chancellor Search Special Committee by [CarterBaldwin](#) Executive Search, one of America's top executive recruiters. The search involved the evaluation of nearly 100 credible candidates over a period of eight months.

"The selection by the trustees of a national executive recruiter clearly demonstrated Liberty's commitment to excellence and its determination to work with the absolute best advisors to help us identify the right leaders to guide Liberty University into the future," said Board Chairman Tim Lee. "With CarterBaldwin's objective help, we looked near and far, and we believe we have found the right leaders at the right time for the future of Liberty University. The combination of President Costin and Chancellor Falwell not only bring the gravitas and experience necessary to lead the University exceptionally well, but with perfect cultural alignment. They will ensure Liberty University remains focused entirely on *Training Champions for Christ* to impact the world in every vocation."

As a member of Liberty University's founding generation, Pastor Falwell brings to the University as Chancellor an invaluable depth of experience. Falwell has spent his lifetime associated with the ministries of Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty University, serving at Thomas Road Baptist Church for nearly 30 years and as its senior pastor since 2007. He has also served on the Board of Trustees of Liberty University for over 30 years. Previously at Liberty University, Falwell held the title of vice chancellor for spiritual affairs and he is presently the University's executive vice president for spiritual affairs/campus pastor. He is also twice an alumnus of Liberty University and he holds a juris doctor. In addition to his church ministry, Pastor Falwell has been a successful entrepreneur, an author, a widely published photographer, and a commercial pilot. He and his wife, Shari, have been married since 1992 and they have four children (three are married) and two grandchildren.



Pastor Jonathan Falwell

Reporting independently to the Board of Trustees, both Pastor Falwell and Dr. Costin will work alongside the University's spiritual and academic leadership to provide comprehensive oversight of the institution's operations and mission.

The appointments also mark the formal transition of Jerry Prevo from the position of Interim President to President Emeritus of the University. This begins the next chapter in Prevo's own 40-year relationship with Liberty University, including as the longtime chairman of the University's Board of Trustees.

Prevo has been an active member of the search committee and helped develop the timeline for the planning, launching, and execution of the search to identify his own successor.

"We are so grateful for the stable, competent and strong leadership Jerry Prevo has provided during this transitional season," said executive committee chairman Carroll Hudson. "Prevo's exceptional tenure as interim president has been marked by record enrollment, a refocusing of the University on its original mission, and substantive, institutional reforms which will provide effective governance of Liberty University going forward, protecting the original mission and vision for future generations. Prevo has made a profound contribution to Liberty University."

The University's Board of Trustees unanimously approved the title of President Emeritus for Prevo to honor the historic contributions he has made to the University.

"It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve Liberty University," said Prevo, "and I am humbled to continue serving in my new role as President Emeritus."

During the spring meeting of the Board of Trustees, the members took the opportunity to reflect on the contributions of the late Gilbert "Bud" Tinney, Jr. to Liberty University and presented a resolution honoring those contributions to his wife, Margee. Tinney served as the chairman of the Presidential and Chancellor Search Committee until his [sudden passing](#) on Feb. 20, 2023 at 85 years old. Tinney had dedicated 48 years of his life in service to the Liberty University Board of Trustees.

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ABOUT LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

[Liberty University](#), founded in 1971, is the world's premier Christian university, one of the largest private, nonprofit universities in the nation, and the largest university in Virginia. Located near the Blue Ridge Mountains on more than 7,000 acres in Lynchburg, Va., Liberty offers more than 700 unique programs of study from the certificate to the doctoral level. Over 600 programs are offered [online](#). Utilizing its world-class infrastructure and Christian faculty, Liberty's mission is to *Train Champions for Christ* with the values, knowledge, and skills essential for impacting tomorrow's world.

ABOUT CARTERBALDWIN EXECUTIVE SEARCH

[CarterBaldwin](#) Executive Search is a retained search firm that partners with leading corporations, organizations, and institutions to help them build exceptional leadership teams. Practice leaders have more than 100 years of combined executive search experience and are focused on delivering excellent results tailored to the unique goals and needs of every client. With C-level corporate search as its foundation, CarterBaldwin also has a robust practice serving nonprofit and academic sectors. The company is listed among the Top 50, the Private Equity Power 75, and the Top 40 higher education search firms by Hunt Scanlon and has been recognized by Forbes as one of America's Best Executive Recruiting Firms.