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**XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA ANNOUNCES NEW PRESIDENT
HBCU Educator Dr. C. Reynold Verret Elected on Proven Record of Leadership**

NEW ORLEANS, LA (May 14, 2015) — The Board of Trustees of Xavier University of Louisiana announced today that it has unanimously elected Dr. C. Reynold Verret as the university’s next president.

“I would like to congratulate and welcome Dr. Verret to the Xavier family,” said Michael Rue, chairman of the Board of Trustees. “While there were a number of highly-qualified candidates, Dr. Verret stood out for his proven leadership and experience expanding enrollment and increasing graduation rates. His record of achievement, personal history, and values set him apart as the clear choice to carry on the ideals that our founder, St. Katharine Drexel, and our longstanding president, Dr. Norman C. Francis, wove into the fabric of this institution.”

Dr. Verret is joining Xavier from Savannah State University where he has served as provost and chief academic officer since 2012. The university is recognized as the oldest institution of higher learning in coastal Georgia and the first public Historically Black College and University (HBCU) in the state.

“I am deeply honored to be elected as the next president of Xavier and am excited to engage the entire Xavier community in envisioning a future that sustains the university’s distinct mission in a changing higher education environment and that responds to societal need,” said Dr. Verret. “Upon arriving in this country as a refugee from Haiti in 1963, I was supported by many who nurtured my love of learning and science and gave me the encouragement and confidence to persevere. During my tenure at Xavier, I will continue paying it forward, helping generations of young people realize their dreams, regardless of their backgrounds.”

Dr. Verret is uniquely qualified by his experience, education, and values to guide Xavier’s mission of promoting a more just and humane society by preparing its students to assume roles of leadership and service in a global society. His journey from immigrating to the United States

as a young boy to guiding institutions of higher education to success has equipped him with distinctive skills and understanding to lead an HBCU in general, and Xavier in particular.

“From its beginning, Xavier has been dedicated to empowerment of the underserved and voiceless through education, which is a vital instrument of societal strength and justice. In this regard, Xavier’s purpose remains relevant, and I am eager to sustain and strengthen it,” said Dr. Verret. “I have been shaped by the encounter of faith and reason, as a student of the Jesuits at the former Brooklyn Preparatory, of the Sisters of St. Joseph, and before then, by the Fathers of the Holy Spirit.”

Dr. Verret was identified through a national search that followed the September 2014 announcement that Dr. Francis would be retiring on June 30, 2015. During this period, the field of potential candidates was narrowed from an initial pool of more than 300.

This is the first time the Xavier Board of Trustees has ever selected a new president. In 1968, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, the religious order that established the university in 1925, promoted Dr. Francis to the post of president. He was the first lay, first male, and first African American head of the university.

“This is one of the most important decisions that the Xavier Board of Trustees has ever had to make, and we made it fully knowing its significance to the future of Xavier and the nation. We remain deeply thankful to the Xavier community for the valuable guidance they have provided us over the course of this most important endeavor. The unanimous election of Dr. Verret is an indicator that the Xavier community’s voice was heard loud and clear,” said Gladstone Jones, III, who chaired Xavier’s Presidential Search Committee.

Following the Search Committee’s recommendation, Dr. Francis met Dr. Verret just prior to the vote by the Board of Trustees.

“I am most pleased to welcome Dr. Verret to Xavier. I have complete confidence that the Board of Trustees made a wise decision, and I know that Dr. Verret will carry on the mission and values of this institution far into the future,” said Dr. Francis, who is retiring after more than 56 years of service to Xavier with 47 years as its president.

“The Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament celebrate the appointment of Dr. C. Reynold Verret. We are confident that the depth and breadth of his experience as well as his appreciation of Xavier’s unique mission and Catholic identity have well prepared him to be its next great president,” said Sr. Patricia Suchalski, president of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament.

Dr. Verret earned his undergraduate degree cum laude in biochemistry from Columbia University and a Ph.D. in biochemistry from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He was also a postdoctoral fellow at the Howard Hughes Institute for Immunology at Yale University and at the Center for Cancer Research at MIT.

As a biochemist, his research interests have included the cytotoxicity of immune cells, biosensors, and biomarkers. He has published in the fields of biological chemistry and immunology.

A Proven Leader in Higher Education

In addition to his current role at Savannah State, Dr. Verret has also served as provost at Wilkes University in Northern Pennsylvania and as the dean of the Misher College of Arts and Sciences at the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia. Dr. Verret has encouraged development of educational programs for undergraduate and graduate students in the humanities, arts, social sciences, and natural sciences. As an administrator, teacher, scholar, and mentor, he brings to Xavier rich experience in and knowledge of higher education.

“I am very pleased Dr. Verret has been selected for this phenomenal opportunity. While his departure is a loss for Savannah State University, he is a proven leader in higher education and is definitely prepared to uphold and advance the strong legacy of the legendary Xavier University,” said Dr. Cheryl D. Dozier, president of Savannah State University.

As provost of Savannah State University, Dr. Verret worked closely with the university president and cabinet to achieve the school’s vision and strategic goals, and he has provided leadership to ensure that the university’s priorities were addressed and implemented. He led the university’s initiatives to build enrollment, enhance the quality and diversity of academic programs and to create cooperative relationships with neighboring institutions and with international partners. He contributed to the university’s advancement efforts by shaping its goals and cultivating donors.

At Wilkes University and the University of the Sciences, he led revisions of general education curricula, oversaw accreditations, developed international programs, established collaborative agreements with neighboring institutions at the K-12 and higher education levels, instituted new state-approved academic programs, promoted interdisciplinary efforts between the humanities and sciences, and planned new facilities.

He has served on the boards of numerous professional organizations and advisory bodies, including those of the National Institutes of Health, the Board of the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, and the Georgia Coastal Indicators Coalition. He has received awards and fellowships for teaching and scholarship.

An Authority in STEM Education

As a scientist, Dr. Verret will build on Xavier’s strong standing in graduating students in the STEM fields. He has helped develop programs to prepare STEM teachers, secure tuition support for teacher certification in STEM fields, and affirm joint instructional and research programs. He has promoted global initiatives in public health and on international science efforts, and as chair of the Chemistry department at Clark Atlanta University, he increased research efforts representing more than \$9.7 million of extramural funding.

A Champion for Liberal Arts and Humanities

Throughout his career, Dr. Verret has worked to build bridges across disciplines, recognizing that the significant questions and societal challenges require knowledge and analysis across many fields. He has promoted interdisciplinary curricula between Liberal Arts, Humanities and Sciences that address the interplay of culture, science, and society and prepare students in all disciplines for leadership roles.

An Experienced Educator

Dr. Verret has served on the faculty at Tulane University, the Misher College of Arts and Sciences at the University of the Sciences, Morehouse School of Medicine, and Clark Atlanta University, in addition to holding academic appointments as professor of chemistry and biochemistry at Savannah State University and Wilkes University.

About Xavier University of Louisiana

Xavier University of Louisiana, founded by Saint Katharine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, is Catholic and historically Black. The ultimate purpose of the University is to contribute to the promotion of a more just and humane society by preparing its students to assume roles of leadership and service in a global society. This preparation takes place in a diverse learning and teaching environment that incorporates all relevant educational means, including research and community service.

Xavier is recognized as the top producer of African American undergraduates continuing to complete medical school and one of the top three producers of African American Doctor of Pharmacy degree recipients. Xavier ranks first nationally in the number of African American students earning undergraduate degrees in biology and life sciences, chemistry, physics and pharmacy.

About HBCUs

According to the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, there are more than 100 HBCUs in the United States that enroll nearly 400,000 students per year. HBCUs represent 3 percent of colleges and universities, yet graduate 20 percent of African Americans with undergraduate degrees – and 25 percent of African Americans with degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields.