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University System of Maryland

University of Maryland President Kirwan Resigns to Head Ohio State University

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Adelphi, MD - Officials of the University System of Maryland (USM) today accepted the resignation of William E. "Brit" Kirwan as president of the University of Maryland, the USM's flagship campus in College Park. Dr. Kirwan resigned the position to accept the presidency of Ohio State University, effective July 1, 1998.

"First and foremost, I want to congratulate President Kirwan on the honor of being selected for this prestigious post from a nationally eminent pool of candidates," said Lance W. Billingsley, chairman of the Board of Regents, governing body for the 13 institutions within the USM. "And I want to congratulate OSU's Trustees on their wisdom in recognizing that Dr. Kirwan is a superb choice for the job."

"At the same time, my happiness for Brit is tempered by sadness at the departure of a remarkable leader and a good friend," Billingsley added. "This is a great loss not only for the campus and the University System but also for the State of Maryland. Brit leaves to the students and to the citizens of Maryland a legacy unmatched in the history of the university. Central to that legacy is a commitment to quality that now permeates the university and has become a great source of pride for all Marylanders. On behalf of the entire Board of Regents, I want to wish Brit and his wife, Patty, every happiness and great success in Ohio."

USM Chancellor Donald N. Langenberg said, "Brit Kirwan stands among an elite few - those university presidents who are equally successful in working with the internal academic community and the many external constituencies that a public university serves. He is as comfortable in the board room as he is in the classroom. He is as effective a fundraiser as he is an educator. He is as respected by state leaders as he is by students. I have considered it a great privilege to work with Brit throughout this decade and am

greatly indebted to him for accelerating the drive for excellence of the University System of Maryland as a whole."

In commenting on his resignation as University of Maryland president, Kirwan noted, "This decision was not made easily. It does not reflect a feeling on my part that there is somewhere I would rather be than College Park. To a large extent it is based on my sense that, regardless of any other considerations, I have served as a senior officer of this university for about as long as anyone should hold such positions at a single institution. Whether this year or in the next few years, the time has come when I believe the university would be better served by allowing a new president to build on the impressive base of excellence and enormous momentum we have at Maryland."

Kirwan said that he was not actively seeking other opportunities when the overture from Ohio State occurred. "The approach from Ohio State came suddenly and unexpectedly," he observed. "The more Patty and I thought about the attractive offer Ohio State made us, however, the more we began to feel that a move at this time made sense for us and for this institution."

Kirwan joined the university in 1964 as an assistant professor of mathematics, rising through the faculty ranks to chair the university's department of mathematics in 1977. He was appointed vice chancellor for academic affairs, the university's top academic officer, in 1981, and was named acting president in 1988. After a nine-month national search, he was appointed president of the university on Feb. 1, 1989.

In the years since his appointment, he has become known for his visionary leadership and for his talent as a consensus builder among the university's large and diverse community.

During his tenure as president, Kirwan has been instrumental in the university's growing stature among the nation's top research universities. In recent years Maryland's colleges of business and management, engineering and education have been ranked among the top 25 in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*. The university's honors program was one of only nine in the U.S. to receive the highest ranking of three stars in the ARCO guide, Ivy League Programs at State School Prices, and a recent *Washingtonian magazine* feature observed that "Kids from states such as Virginia and North Carolina pass up their own highly regarded state universities to head to College Park."

The university's presence in the National Academy of Sciences, the highly selective organization of scientists and engineers, also has advanced in the years of Kirwan's presidency, from one NAS member in 1989 to 15 today. A recent book, The Rise of American Research Universities, ranked the university eighth out of 21 institutions it identified as "rising research universities in the public sector."

Research funding has grown dramatically under Kirwan's leadership, from \$87 million in Fiscal Year 1989 to \$155 in FY 1997. Additionally, funds from corporate and private sources also have burgeoned during his presidency. Annual gifts have increased from about \$13 million in 1989 to more than \$47 million in 1997, and over the same period the endowment has grown from \$39 million to over \$158 million.

In his 1989 inaugural address, Kirwan identified diversity as one of the key priorities of his administration. His success in this area is borne out by statistics that show the percent of African-American undergraduate students has grown from 9.1% of undergraduates in 1989 to 14.5% in 1997. The university's diversity initiative established by Kirwan in 1993 was recently recognized by President Clinton's Initiative on Race as one of the "Promising Practices," efforts that are successfully promoting diversity. The President's Initiative on Race also identified DiversityWeb, developed by

Maryland and the American Association of Colleges and Universities, as a major resource for colleges and universities across the nation.

Since assuming the presidency, Kirwan has made international activities a centerpiece of the university's colleges, centers and institutes. An annual directory published by the Office of International Affairs lists 138 units with an international focus or component. In 1996 more than 2,600 international students studied at Maryland and, in research, the university has evolved into a leader in international research activities, with established relationships in every college. Kirwan's personal involvement in international affairs includes his serving on the Council for International Exchange of Scholars (the Fulbright program) board of directors and as chair of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the Korea America Friendship Society. Last year he was chosen to receive the Governor's Award from the World Trade Center Institute in Baltimore, in recognition of his exceptional support of the state's international trade efforts.

"Given our deep and enduring affection for this university and the people that make up its community, there would never be a good time for us to leave Maryland," Kirwan said. "In another sense, however, this is a good time for me to leave the presidency. Because of the effort put forth by many people, the recognition of the university as a place of academic excellence has never been greater nor its prospects for future advancement brighter. For this reason, I am confident that the search for a new president at this time will attract an exceptional pool of candidates."

"A national search for Kirwan's successor will begin immediately; our goal will be to name a new president by this summer," Langenberg announced. "We look forward to working with representatives from across the campus and from the community at large to find a candidate of the highest caliber to fill one of the most attractive and important positions in American higher education."

The University of Maryland located in College Park offers 97 undergraduate programs, 94 master's programs, and 73 doctoral programs to some 33,000 students.

The University System of Maryland comprises Bowie State University; Coppin State College; Frostburg State University; Salisbury State University; Towson University; University of Baltimore; University of Maryland, Baltimore; University of Maryland, Baltimore County; University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute; University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science; University of Maryland, College Park; University of Maryland Eastern Shore; and University of Maryland University College.

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