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Anthony J. DiGiorgio, President Emeritus Biography

President Emeritus

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Anthony J. DiGiorgio, President Emeritus



This official portrait of President Emeritus Anthony DiGiorgio, Winthrop's ninth president, was placed in the Tillman Hall gallery of presidential portraits in 2013.

President Emeritus Anthony J. DiGiorgio, now Winthrop's first Distinguished Professor of Public Service and Leadership, led Winthrop University from 1989 until his retirement from the presidency in 2013.

As the institution's ninth president, Dr. DiGiorgio is credited with transforming Winthrop from a regional college with a venerable history to a national-caliber comprehensive university that helps set the pace for quality higher education in the thriving Charlotte-Metrolina region.

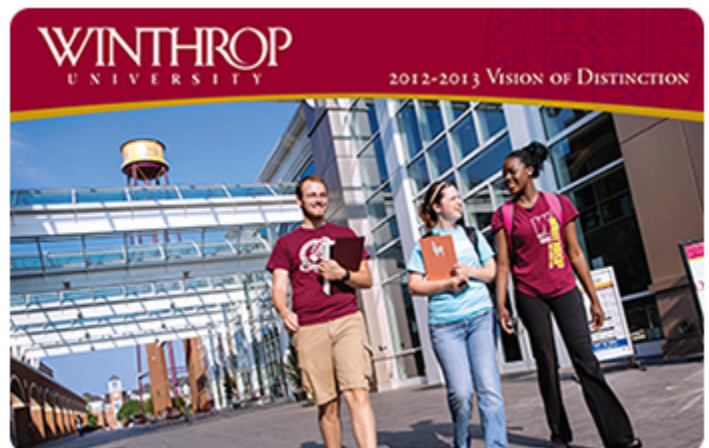
As the 21st century's longest-serving president of any public university in South Carolina, Dr. DiGiorgio often says his longer than usual tenure in his post meant his career had included "four or five presidencies – they've just all been at Winthrop."

Known for his personal and professional dedication for excellence, Dr. DiGiorgio believes that attaining excellence requires three things:

- caring more than some might think is wise,
- risking more than some might think is safe, and
- dreaming more than some might think is practical.*

DiGiorgio began his presidency by articulating a "[Vision of Distinction \(pdf - 1.54 MB\)](#)" for Winthrop, then leading the university community in designing a series of annual work plans that advanced the goals encompassed by the vision. While each year's work plan was adjusted as market imperatives shifted, a core of agreed-upon values continued at the center of the enterprise, and those endure in the culture of the Winthrop campus community.

Over the years, Winthrop stakeholders looked to the "Vision of Distinction" annual work plan to see where Winthrop was headed, knowing that each new



year's work plan would build on the foundation of the previous year's achievements. DiGiorgio often likens his approach to a family's achievements, with each new generation building on the foundation of its elders – an observation drawn from his own youth.

The son of an immigrant bricklayer, Anthony Joseph DiGiorgio was born in Sharon, Pennsylvania, in 1940. Like many immigrants to this country, the DiGiorgio family found that hard work and persistence were the keys to survival in America – key elements that characterize the DiGiorgio leadership style today.

After receiving his undergraduate degree at Gannon College, Dr. DiGiorgio earned his master's and doctoral degrees from Purdue University. After achieving his Ph.D., Dr. DiGiorgio continued his education with extensive postdoctoral training in psychology and educational development. In 1987, he attended the Institute for Educational Management at Harvard University.

Dr. DiGiorgio's career in education began in 1963 when he taught English at Belleville Senior High School in New Jersey. Three years later, he became an instructor and Assistant to the Dean of Humanities, Social Science and Education at Purdue University.

In 1970, he began the first of 19 years of service at The College of New Jersey, a former state teachers' college that evolved to a nationally recognized comprehensive college. He served The College of New Jersey in a number of positions, including Vice President for Academic Affairs. Also while there, he met his wife, Gale, who was then Dean of Student Life at a nearby institution. The DiGiorgio family includes two daughters, the elder of whom passed away in 2007, and three grandchildren.



In January 1989, Dr. DiGiorgio was appointed by the Winthrop College **Board of Trustees** to become Winthrop's ninth president. In that role, he led the college's conversion to Winthrop University, a comprehensive teaching institution now offering 42 undergraduate and 26 graduate degree programs, and initiated the University's successful drive to achieve 100 percent accreditation in all Winthrop programs for which national accreditation was offered, which was achieved in 1996.

Throughout Dr. DiGiorgio's presidency, Winthrop University regularly was rated among the top public institutions of its kind in the South, winning accolades for academic excellence, character development, commitment to diversity, student programming, sound fiscal management and environmental achievements. It regularly ranked in the 'Top Ten' public universities in the South offering master's degrees by *U.S. News and World Report*, as well as appearing in *Princeton Review's* "Best Colleges," and *Barron's* "Best Buys in Higher Education," among other national recognitions.

Dr. DiGiorgio is a former member of the board of directors of the **National Collegiate Athletics Association**, having served two terms. He also has served as a member of the board of the Charlotte division of the **Federal Reserve Bank**, as the South Carolina representative to the **American Association of State**

Colleges and Universities' State Leadership Council, as a member of the board of the **Charlotte**

Regional Partnership for Economic Development, the boards of York County Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Rock Hill Economic Development Corporation, and numerous professional organizations.

Today, he and the First Lady Emeritus make their home near Tucson, Arizona, following his retirement from the university in Spring 2017.

**Adapted from Canadian author-educator Claude Bissell*