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# DiGiorgio Announces Plan For Summer 2013 Retirement

## Quick Facts

- The Winthrop Board of Trustees is expected to authorize a national search for DiGiorgio's successor in April. The search process is expected to take 15 months.
- After concluding his 24th year as president, DiGiorgio in 2013 will become President Emeritus and Distinguished Service Professor at Winthrop. He and his wife, Gale, will continue to live in Rock Hill.



Anthony DiGiorgio

ROCK HILL, S.C. - **Dr. Anthony J. DiGiorgio**, one of the longest-serving public university presidents in America, today announced to the Winthrop University community that the 2012-2013 academic year will be his last as president at Winthrop before retirement.

"After 50 years in education – 24 of them at Winthrop by Spring 2013 – it will be time that Gale and I find out what life is like outside the academic calendar," DiGiorgio said in a video clip e-mailed to all Winthrop faculty and staff simultaneously this morning.

**The DiGiorgios**, who were first introduced to Rock Hill in 1989, will continue to live in South Carolina, having built an off-campus home in Rock Hill in 2010.

The timing of their decision, DiGiorgio said, was made easier because "the economy seems to be rebounding from the 2008 Great Recession now, and state funding seems to be stabilizing, albeit at a much lower level. So this timing will work best, both for Winthrop and for us. It simply wouldn't have felt appropriate to do it any sooner, given the state of the national economy and the necessity of preparing for a transformed future in a constricted economic climate. Initiating the process now gives everyone time for a careful search and a smooth transition."

**Dalton Floyd**, chairman of the [Winthrop University Board of Trustees](#), said in a statement also issued Tuesday that the board at its next meeting will authorize a 15-month national search for DiGiorgio's successor, who will become the 10th president in Winthrop's 127-year history. A transition will occur during the summer of 2013, with the new president presiding over the opening of his or her first Winthrop academic year in August 2013, according to a prospective transition timetable provided by officials.

"As a result of Tony's unparalleled vision and dedicated leadership over the years," Floyd said, "Winthrop now is listed routinely among the best universities of its type, and is routinely singled out nationally for accolades in academic quality and value. That speaks to the combined work of faculty and staff, fulfilling over many years a shared vision of and commitment to the institution and its leadership. In addition, the campus is more attractive and functional than ever, with many new facilities that are 21st century in every way, so prospective students find all they need here to make the most of the national caliber learning opportunities they are provided.

"All those accomplishments," Floyd continued, "mean the elements essential for Winthrop's readiness, long-term growth, and a continued bright future are well-established, thanks to Tony's tireless leadership. So the trustees will be looking for a next president whose job will be to continue that trajectory, while also embracing the vision and protecting the special nature and character of Winthrop that has become so important to everyone now associated with the campus."

Current trustee **Bob Thompson** of Rock Hill was president of the Winthrop Foundation in 1989, when DiGiorgio was selected, and has been involved with the university in various roles ever since.

“For a variety of reasons, there had been seven people sitting in the president’s chair in the decade before Tony was chosen in 1989,” Thompson recalled. “At that point, it was felt that Winthrop needed continuity in leadership, a vision for what it could become and the dedication and administrative skill necessary to bring about fulfillment of that vision over time.

“Tony has delivered all that over the years in a way that well exceeds what the campus community had hoped for in those years. All of us who knew Winthrop back then look around today, amazed at what is here now, yet Winthrop still has the same warm family feel that we always appreciated about it. That is a considerable accomplishment for any university, and extremely important to Winthrop and its alumni.”

Winthrop Board Vice-Chair **Kathy Bigham** of Rock Hill said that, “Tony also has been generous with his time in taking on community leadership responsibilities, and giving Winthrop a higher profile locally, regionally and nationally.” She cited as local examples Winthrop’s agreements to partner with the City of Rock Hill in re-development of the Textile Corridor, downtown and other urban re-development goals.

“Tony for years has made it a point to be just a phone call away when any economic development prospect is visiting in York County and wants to know about the region’s educational resources,” Bigham said. “As an alum over the years, I always was pleased to see him work as a committed partner in our community and state. Only since becoming a trustee have I seen how much deeper his commitment to Rock Hill is than I had ever realized. I admire him personally now, as well as professionally.”

Over the past two decades, DiGiorgio has served in various capacities with national organizations, including the American Association of State Colleges and Universities; two terms as a national board member with the National Collegiate Athletics Association; member of the Charlotte board of the Federal Reserve Bank; member of the board of Charlotte USA; chair of the Big South Conference; chairman of the board of the S.C. Governor’s School for Science and Math, and member of the boards of the Greater York County Chamber of Commerce and Rock Hill Economic Development Corporation.

DiGiorgio called his activities on campus and off as Winthrop’s ninth president “the honor of my life. My passion for education was instilled in me by my parents, neither of whom were able to finish elementary school. As eventual immigrants to America, both of them felt education was the pathway to a better life for their children, and everyone else’s, too. That became the focal point of my professional life, and it will continue to be a cause about which I care deeply.

“My greatest sadness,” DiGiorgio said, “is that neither of my parents lived to see their son become a university president. Gale’s late parents also were dedicated to the cause of education – her father was a top-level administrator at both the University of Kentucky and West Virginia University. That’s why over the years, we already have set up Winthrop scholarships in our parents’ names to honor them.”

**Gale DiGiorgio**, who has been active with both students and local community and civic groups over the years, noted that she and her husband decided long ago that Rock Hill would remain the couple’s home whenever retirement came. “It’s a warm, welcoming community that accepted us as newcomers so readily. As a result, we have made what I call ‘forever friends’ here, both on campus and in the Rock Hill community, so there was no question that this would continue to be home. We will stay involved here – just in a quieter, more low-profile way.”

Among Gale DiGiorgio’s current community activities are the Boys and Girls Clubs of York County, Ambassador for the “# 1 Question: Is it Good for the Children?” initiative, Kiwanis Club, tutoring with the STAR program at Oakland Avenue Presbyterian Church and the Perihlion and Castalian Book Clubs. She previously has served on boards for the United Way of York County, York County Arts Council, Cities in Schools and the YMCA.

Both DiGiorgios indicated the ability to travel more freely has the same appeal to them as it does most retirees, along with “more time with the grandchildren,” who now number three.

Floyd said that DiGiorgio after his 2013 retirement will continue to be of service to Winthrop, carrying the dual titles of President Emeritus and Distinguished Service Professor. Following a year’s sabbatical, his duties will include a blend of public service, consulting, writing, and occasional lectures, to be developed in more detail in consultation with his successor. DiGiorgio will have use of an office already designated for him in the DiGiorgio Campus Center.

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