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Retiring President Inducted into Big South Hall of Fame For His Contributions

Winthrop University

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Retiring President Inducted into Big South Hall of Fame For His Contributions

Quick Facts

- Dr. DiGiorgio was inducted along with former Liberty volleyball record holder Anthonia Akpama and Radford men's soccer standout Ian Spooner.
- The Class of 2013 inductees increases the Big South Conference Hall of Fame to 52 members since its founding in 2003.



Anthony DiGiorgio, from left, Anthonia Akpama and Ian Spooner

HOT SPRINGS, VA. - Retiring Winthrop President Dr. Anthony DiGiorgio received the highest recognition from the Big South Conference May 30 when he was inducted into the league's Hall of Fame during the annual Hall of Fame and Awards Dinner held at The Homestead Resort.

Dr. DiGiorgio was inducted along with former Liberty volleyball record holder Anthonia Akpama and Radford men's soccer standout Ian Spooner. The Class of 2013 inductees increases the Big South Conference Hall of Fame to 52 members since its founding in 2003.

"There are wonderful memories from participating in the Big South over the years that could really fill a dozen scrapbooks. The important thing is that they will always remain in my heart," he said. "For those reasons, I thank all of you for the partnership and friendship, and along with Anthonia and Ian, we are very grateful for being inducted into this year's Hall of Fame."

He will conclude his 24 years as Winthrop's ninth president upon his retirement next month, and is the longest-serving president of any public university in the state of South Carolina. During his tenure, Dr. DiGiorgio has led the institution's conversion from Winthrop College to Winthrop University, a comprehensive teaching institution now offering 89 undergraduate and 41 graduate degree programs and options.

Under his leadership, Winthrop has grown from a regional college to a national-caliber comprehensive university that is regularly rated among the top public institutions of its kind in the South by U.S. News & World Report. He also initiated the university's successful drive to achieve 100 percent accreditation in all Winthrop programs for which national accreditation is offered.

During his time in office, the Eagles have won 53 Big South championships and have made 44 NCAA Tournament appearances during this period, highlighted by the men's basketball team's historic NCAA Tournament win over Notre Dame in 2007, Winthrop winning the Big South's Men's All-Sports Award trophy for the 2006-07 campaign, and Winthrop's SAAC winning the Big South Conference's Kallander Cup Community Service award four consecutive years since 2009.

Dr. DiGiorgio's service to the Big South Conference is just as impressive, as he is the only individual to be elected Big South president two separate terms, and served a total of nine years from 1992-

98 and 2006-09 -- the most in league history. He was selected to serve on the prestigious **President's Commission** of the NCAA in July 1992 and has served two terms on the **Board of Directors** of the **NCAA** and its Executive Committee.

During his first term as **Big South president**, the conference membership reached **10 institutions** for the first time in July 1992. The Big South also received automatic bids in women's basketball, men's soccer and volleyball, beginning in 1993-94. In addition, the conference added five sports during his first term as league president -- women's soccer in 1993, men's and women's outdoor track & field in 1993-94 and men's and women's indoor track & field in 1997-98.

During his second stint as Big South president, Dr. DiGiorgio oversaw the additions of **Gardner-Webb University** and **Presbyterian College**, as well as the return of charter member Campbell University.

A persistent advocate for quality and standards, Dr. DiGiorgio told the dinner audience that "the real progress for the Big South has always come from teamwork, from partnerships, from working with like-minded presidents, the thoughtful, energetic staff, and all the athletic directors, all of the faculty athletic representatives, all of the senior women administrators, the SIDs (sports information directors, all of the coaches who have been willing to work really hard. All of that is at the heart of being a successful, growing organization. That is what the Big South Conference is," he said.

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