

TRIBUTE TO DR. JAMES SCANLON

Dr. James Scanlon, Provost at Youngstown State University from 1993-2001, passed away on March 13, 2023, after a years-long battle with Cancer.

Dr. Scanlon's tenure at YSU was one of distinction; indeed, his transformational activity rendered him a titan in our educational and leadership history. Dr. Scanlon guided the Academic Division through reorganization, the creation of the College of Health and Human Services, conversion to the semester system, general education reform, and the establishment of a host of new academic programs, including the first new master's program in decades.

His commitment to excellence was fundamental to the growth of the University Honors Program and to improved academic quality at YSU, which was recognized by accreditation from several national professional organizations, as well as numerous student and faculty/staff awards. Dr. Scanlon's leadership was instrumental in effecting the integration of teaching, scholarship and service and led to dramatically increased external funding and connections with the community. His contributions to YSU and the community and his personal integrity, which fostered values of inclusion, collegiality and quality of service, attest to his human qualities. President Emeritus Leslie Cochran stated in 2020 that "James (Jim) Scanlon was the most significant academic leader in YSU's modern-day era; in fact, he shaped most of the present-day academic standards, structures and expectations."

As impressive as the above contributions are, there is something more that Dr. Scanlon imparted to us during his years at YSU. In his 1997 address to YSU's chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, "Ethics in the University," he articulated thoughts from Plato and Aristotle to Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin about the role of a university as a place for individuals to pursue meaning for themselves and the common good. He said, in quoting Franklin, "that a university education should serve individual interests and advance, in practical ways, the building of a nation or promote the common interest." Scanlon asserted that the moral foundation of the American university, including YSU, unmistakably links the individual and the common good, giving public higher education its moral function.

In his concluding remarks he argued, "The ethical challenge for us in the university is to take leadership in defining and articulating our intellectual purposes and in connecting them to our work together in the University and to societal need—to the intellectual, social, cultural and economic needs of society. It requires us to connect the values of the intellectual community—Youngstown State University—to the public good, to build our future on a moral foundation that accommodates individual and common good in the best traditions of American higher education."

Dr. James Scanlon's tangible contributions to YSU were varied and impactful; his moral compass regarding the role of universities was deeply respected by all who worked with him. In recognition of his extraordinary service, Dr. Scanlon was selected to receive the 2021 YSU Heritage Award, an honor that recognizes former YSU faculty and professional/administrative staff who have made major contributions to the university during their years of employment.

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