



**BOARD OF REGENTS OF
THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA**

November 4, 2015

John K. Thornburgh
Elizabeth K. Bohan
Witt/Kieffer
Pittsburg, PA

Dear Mr. Thornburgh and Ms. Bohan:

With this letter and the attached *curriculum vitae* and references, I would like to express interest in the search for the next President of the University of New Orleans. It is an understatement to say that these are challenging times for public higher education. Having served as a college and university faculty member and administrator, CEO of private companies, State Senator, university system Vice-Chancellor, and interim university President, my calling is to lead a great public university. I firmly believe that our public universities carry with them the best hopes and prospects for an often fearful and confused society that cries out for focus, clarity, opportunity, and leadership. No institution is more critical to economic and societal success than our public universities.

More specifically, I want to be President of the University of New Orleans because I believe in its aspiration to be a nationally recognized research university that serves both traditional and non-traditional students. The University of New Orleans must also be an institution that:

- provides comprehensive undergraduate, graduate, and professional education of the utmost quality;
- carries out research and intellectual endeavors of the highest standards that advance knowledge and have immediate or long-range practical importance for the real world;
- provides leadership for economic growth, technology, and culture for New Orleans, Louisiana, and the region;
- fulfills these objectives while encouraging diversity and positioning the University as a global educational innovator.

As a first generation college student who received a wonderful education at Furman University, paving the way for a journey to the academic heights of doctoral work at the University of Oxford, I understand the power of education to change lives, families, and communities. I am interested in leading an innovative institution ready to navigate successfully the challenges facing public higher education today. Now, more than ever, our nation needs university graduates who are globally aware, intellectually curious, and morally grounded—critical thinkers, writers, and speakers who are prepared to solve problems and advance human knowledge as agents of positive change.

My background is diverse including 15 years as a university faculty member and administrator. I served Mercer University, a multi-campus comprehensive institution with key professional programs including law, business, education, medicine, pharmacy, engineering, and nursing, as Associate Provost and Associate Professor for more than eleven years, heading units, directing strategic initiatives, and working on a successful advancement campaign. I worked in the private sector as a founding president and CEO of successful publishing and media companies. And for ten years I served as a Georgia State Senator and the recognized leader in the Georgia General Assembly on higher education, and health care related issues, chairing the Senate Appropriations Sub-Committee on Higher

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Education, responsible for the state's two billion dollar annual investment in higher education. I also led efforts to increase enrollment and funding for the Mercer University School of Medicine, securing more than 200 million in state funding over ten years.

Following my retirement from the Senate, I accepted the position of Vice-Chancellor for Extended Education with the University System of Georgia. As such, I served as the Chief International Officer for the system and was responsible for the system-wide priorities of international education, continuing and professional education, entrepreneurial education, and military affairs. I served as the USG's lead for the work of the Georgia Research Alliance. I worked with the USG Foundation on related fundraising activities including an ambitious plan to raise funds for need based scholarships for study abroad students. I supported Georgia's economic development initiatives in order to match the resources of USG institutions with evolving workforce needs. And I led system efforts that created the Georgia Film Academy in 2015, supporting the state's burgeoning film industry.

In April of this year, USG Chancellor Hank Huckaby asked me to step in as Interim President of Valdosta State University, a regional comprehensive university with 11,250 students, and colleges of Arts and Sciences, Arts, Business, Education, Health Sciences, together with an Honors College and Graduate School. During the interim year, VSU is focusing upon marketing, student success, and retention in or to reverse recent enrollment declines. Since arriving I have created a \$1 million fund to support an initiative called Project Innovate, which will provide financial support for competitively awarded proposals that have the potential to increase enrollment, credit hour production, and improve graduation rates. I have launched a \$2 million marketing, imaging, and branding campaign called VSYOU that has already lead to an increase in applications for the fall of 2016 of more than 100% over the same time last year. I have worked to balance the university's budget to match current enrollment and credit hour production, involving a cut of approximately \$4.4 million in the budget for the next fiscal year. And I have supported the momentum of our current capital campaign, which has raised more than \$45 million in just the last 16 months, and approximately \$10 million in just the last four months.

A university is ultimately about students and faculty and staff who are there to mentor, guide, and intellectually inspire them to advance knowledge and learning. From my perspective, the University of New Orleans needs a visionary leader and communicator who can work to unite the university's various constituencies around a clear mission and purpose. It requires someone who can successfully integrate into the community to foster support and commitment for the university and its mission. Having served as the CEO of a multi-media company and with ten years of political involvement, I have the experience to navigate successfully the business and political landscape and garner support for the institution from the Legislature and Governor's office. It requires someone with significant business acumen, and someone who will be respected by potential donors. It requires a collaborative leader who will work to bring every aspect of the university together in order to achieve excellence and advance the goal of being a great American public research university, continuously raising the stature of the university across the nation and within academia. I believe my academic, business, and political experience uniquely qualify me for the challenges ahead for the next President of the University of New Orleans.

More details concerning my career may be found in the accompanying curriculum vitae. I would be honored to be considered by the search committee. Please let me know if I can provide additional information or answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Cecil Staton, D.Phil. (Oxon)

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CURRICULUM VITAE

CECIL P. STATON, D.PHIL. (OXON)

INTERIM PRESIDENT, VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY; AND
VICE CHANCELLOR FOR EXTENDED EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

EDUCATION

Graduate, AASCU New Presidents Academy, 2015. American Association of State Colleges and Universities annual leadership program for new presidents focusing upon strategic visioning, shaping the organization, financial management, NCAA athletics, crisis management, leading change, external relations, and advancement.

Doctor of Philosophy (D.Phil.) degree in Old Testament, Hebrew and Ancient Near Eastern Studies from the University of Oxford, England, October 1988. Member of Regent's Park College. Thesis: "And Yahweh Appeared: A Study of the Motifs of 'Seeing God' and of 'God's Appearing' in Old Testament Narratives," supervised by Professor Ernest W. Nicholson; examined by Professor John Barton and Dr. Adrian Curtis. Received the American Scholarship for achievement during first year of research, Regent's Park College, University of Oxford, 1986-1987; and the Overseas Research Student Award, University of Oxford, 1987-1988.

Master of Theology (Th.M.) degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina, December 1985. Majored in Hebrew and Old Testament studies. Thesis: "A Study of the Language of Theophany in the Old Testament with Special Reference to the Niphal of *r'h*," supervised by Professor John I. Durham. Received the R. T. Daniel Award for achievement in the Study of the Old Testament, 1983; and the G. Henton Davies Prize for achievement in the Study of Hebrew, 1985. Served as Grader and Fellow for three years to Professor of Hebrew, Dr. B. Elmo Scoggin.

Master of Divinity with Languages (M.Div.) degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina, December, 1982. Focused upon Hebrew, Old Testament studies, and the ancient Near East. Participated in archaeological digs at Dan and Aroer in Israel, 1982.

Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree from Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina, June, 1980. Majored in Religion with secondary emphasis in Philosophy. Participated in study abroad program in Israel, Jordan, Italy, and France. Received the Baggot Award as outstanding religion major, 1980.

Diploma from Carolina High School, Greenville, South Carolina, 1976. President of the Student Body and South Carolina Scholastic Press Association
Photographer of the Year Award, senior year.

ACADEMIC, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND POLITICAL EXPERIENCE

Interim President, Valdosta State University, July 1, 2015 to present. VSU is a comprehensive regional university of the University System of Georgia with 11,250 students, more than 560 faculty and 870 staff members, and an annual budget of more than \$175 million. VSU is made up of colleges of Arts and Sciences, Arts, Business, Education, and Nursing and Health Sciences, together with an Honors College and Graduate School. VSU serves as the intellectual, cultural, and economic center of its region. The University is known for the arts and is home to the Valdosta Symphony Orchestra as well as the Peach State Summer Theater. It is also known for its NCAA Division II athletic programs including multiple national championships in football and other sports. Appointed by the Chancellor and on loan from the University System for the 2015-2016 academic year, leadership is being provided in directing efforts to correct falling undergraduate enrollments while managing significant demand and growth for graduate programs. The University is coming off of several years of administrative instability as well as the fallout from several negative events on campus over the last year. The focus of the interim year will be marketing and imaging efforts as well as a university wide recommitment to retention and student success. Balancing the budget for the 2016-2017 academic year must also be accomplished including potential faculty and staff reductions for areas where credit hour production has fallen leading to reduced state appropriations. The interim president is fully engaged in VSU's current capital campaign, which has raised more than \$45 million in including more than \$10 million during the interim period thus far.

Vice-Chancellor for Extended Education, University System of Georgia, 2014 to present. Responsible for leadership of the strategic and long-term initiatives of International Education, Professional and Continuing Education, Entrepreneurship Education, and Military Affairs for the University System of Georgia, comprising 30 colleges and universities including four R-1 institutions: University of Georgia, Georgia Tech, Georgia State, and Georgia Regents University. Serves as the Chief International Officer for the USG. Serves as the liaison between the Board of Regents, USG institutions and key government, business and postsecondary partners. Works with the deans, faculty and research staff to address legal and regulatory requirements that may have an impact on related program and service areas. Works with the USG Foundation to discover gift and funding opportunities for needs based scholarships, particularly related to International Education. Works with the Board of Regent's economic development office to identify expansion opportunities with the private sector, government, and USG supporters, addressing Georgia's workforce needs. Provides leadership for USG's role with the Georgia Research Alliance. Led efforts to create the Georgia Film Academy in 2015, to support the workforce needs of Georgia's burgeoning film and digital entertainment industry.

Georgia State Senator, District 18, 2004 to 2014 (R). Elected in 2004 and re-elected in 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2012. District 18 included all or portions of Bibb, Houston, Jones, Monroe, Peach, Upson and Crawford counties. Following service as Vice-Chair of the Republican Caucus, Staton was elected Majority Whip in November 2010 and again in 2012. During his tenure he served on numerous committees including: the Committee on Assignments, which appoints chairs and committee members; vice-chair of the Transportation Committee; chair of the Science and Technology Committee; and on the Higher Education, Reapportionment, Banking, Rules, Regulated Industries, Veterans and Military Affairs, and Appropriations committees. Served as Chairman of the Higher Education Sub-Committee of Appropriations, responsible for Georgia's funding of the University System of Georgia, the Technical College System of Georgia, the Georgia Research Alliance, and Georgia Public Broadcasting. Served as vice chair of the Senate Appropriations sub-committee on Community Health, championing efforts to increase the healthcare workforce of Georgia. Sponsored legislation creating the Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission and successfully advocated for more than 100 million in investment in the state's trauma care system. Advocated for state funding allowing enrollment expansion for the Mercer University School of Medicine, securing more than 200 million in funding over ten years. Through the appropriations process Staton was involved in formulating the state's budget of more than 20 billion dollars annually including more than two billion dollars annually for higher education.

Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Inc., Founding President and Publisher, 1990-2013. Smyth & Helwys is a private publishing company, which has grown from a start-up to publish more than 30 books, and 80 curriculum products marketed throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. Named for John Smyth and Thomas Helwys, early 17th century English dissenters, founders of the earliest known Baptist churches, and pioneers of religious liberty in England.

Stroud & Hall Publishers, Inc., Founding President and Publisher, 2004 to 2013. Stroud and Hall is a boutique publishing company that publishes books in the fields of politics and current events. Selecting only several books each year, Stroud & Hall received national acclaim for the publication of two New York Times bestsellers by former Georgia Governor and U.S. Senator Zell Miller.

Staton Broadcasting, Inc. and Georgia Eagle Media, Inc., Founding President and CEO, February 2001 to 2013. During this time Georgia Eagle Broadcasting, Inc., successor to Staton Broadcasting, Inc., a holding company for broadcasting, newspaper, and media properties, grew from one station to a group that included 15 radio stations, a newspaper, and one television station serving central and southeast Georgia.

Associate Provost, Associate Professor, and University Publisher, Mercer University, Macon, Georgia, 1991 to 2003. As Associate Provost, Staton led Mercer's academic publishing efforts through Mercer University Press, with responsibility for encouraging and assisting faculty in their research and publishing endeavors. He undertook special administrative assignments as directed by the President or Provost of the University, taught ancient history, Hebrew, and Old Testament classes in the College of Liberal Arts, and served on the study committee that led to the establishment of the McAfee School of Theology. He served as a presidential fellow in 2002, travelling to 15 comprehensive universities around the country leading to the publication of *A Sturdy American Hybrid* (Mercer University Press, 2003). He led University Advancement activities that secured more than \$4,500,000 in endowment for the Mercer University Press.

Assistant Professor, Brewton-Parker College, Mount Vernon, Georgia, 1989-1991. A small, private, liberal arts college with approximately 1,500 students, there Staton served as a member of the Promotions and Tenure Committee and as an editor for the institutional self-study for renewal of accreditation (1990-1991). He taught ancient history, Old Testament, and Hebrew courses. He was active in public

relations for the college through service to area churches and speaking opportunities throughout the region.

Tutor, Regent's Park College, University of Oxford, 1987-1988. Responsible for individual tutorials with students preparing for exams in the Oxbridge tradition during final year of D.Phil. research and writing.

SELECT PUBLICATIONS

Author of numerous editorials and articles for the Macon Telegraph, Atlanta Journal Constitution, Jones County News, Warner Robins Patriot, Thomaston Times, and Upson Beacon, newspapers.

Author, *A Sturdy American Hybrid: The Associated New American Colleges*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 2003.

Author, "Theophany," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000.

Editor and Author, *Why I am a Baptist: Reflections on Being Baptist in the 21st Century*. Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 1999.

Chair, Editorial Board, *Mercer Library of Biblical Studies*. Volume 1, *Genesis* by Herman Gunkel. Translated by Mark E. Biddle. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997; Volume 2, *Introduction to the Psalms* by Herman Gunkel. Translated by James D. Nogalski, 1998.

Series Editor with Jeffrey S. Rogers, *Studies in Old Testament Interpretation*, Volumes 1 and 2, 1995; Volume 3, 1996. Macon: Mercer University Press.

Editor and Author, *Interpreting Amos for Preaching and Teaching*, Kerygma and Church. Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 1995.

Author, "Obadiah," *Mercer Commentary on the Bible*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1994; and in *Mercer Commentary on the Bible, Volume 4: The Prophets*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1996.

Author, "The History of Smyth & Helwys Publishing," *The Struggle for the Soul of the SBC*. Walter B. Shurden, editor. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1993.

Editor and Author, *Interpreting Hosea for Preaching and Teaching*, Kerygma and Church. Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 1993.

Author, "The Worship Experience," *Formations Commentary*. Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 1992: 17-35.

Editor and Author, *Interpreting Isaiah for Preaching and Teaching*, Kerygma and Church. Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 1991.

Author, "How Long, O Yahweh?: The Complaint Prayer of Psalm 13," *Faith and Mission*, VII/2 (Spring 1990): 59-67.

Author, "Boundary Stones," "Cosmetics," "Gerasa," "Images/Figurines," "Medeba," "Perea," "Shophar," and "Spice," *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1990.

Author, "Spiritual Health and Proper Worship," in *The Way of Faith*, James M. Pitts, Editor. Wake Forest: Chanticleer Publishing Company, Inc., 1985: 143-148.

SELECT HONORS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Member, Board of Directors, Georgia Chamber of Commerce, 2015 to present

Georgia Independent College Association 2014 Miller-Deal Award, for significant public service in the area of higher education. The award is GICA's highest honor. GICA is made up of 26 private colleges and universities in Georgia.

Mercer University Honors, Commencement 2014. Awarded the honorary Doctor of Humanities degree for service and leadership in higher education and medical education for the State of Georgia.

Member, Board of Visitors, University of Georgia, 2013 to present

Emory University Center for Injury Control Award for contributions to trauma care in Georgia, 2013

Georgia Hospital Association Legislator of the Year, 2011

Georgia Technology Association Legislator of the Year, 2010

Georgia Rural Health Care Association Legislator of the Year, 2010

Georgia Ambulance Association Star of Life Award, 2009

Commencement Speaker, Mercer University School of Medicine, 2008

Received the inaugural Richard B. Furman Award from Furman University, 2000

Who's Who in the Media and Communications, 1998-1999, and subsequent years

Executive of the Year 1993-1994, Professional Secretaries International

Who's Who in Religion, 1992-1993, and subsequent years

Previous member, American Academy of Religion

Previous member, Society of Biblical Literature

Previous member, National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion

Member, Board of Directors, *Baptists Today*, Atlanta, Georgia, 1998-1999. *Baptist Today* is a national, autonomous publication of news and opinion for Baptists in the USA

Member, Advisory Board, Macon Chapter of Professional Secretaries International, 1992-1996

Founding Ambassador, Blue Ribbon Parents, Inc., a not-for-profit foundation dedicated to the encouragement of parental involvement in K-12 Education, 2001 to 2004

Member, Board of Directors and Executive Committee, The Museum of Arts and Sciences, Macon, Georgia. 2001 to 2008

Member, Board of Directors, Georgia Writers, a profession support organization for authors and sponsor of the annual Georgia Author of the Year Awards, 2000-2002

Member, Board of Directors, Macon Symphony Orchestra and Steering Committee for

endowment campaign, 2000 to 2005

Previous member, Downtown Rotary Club, Macon, Georgia

Member, Gridiron Secret Society, University of Georgia

Member, Oxford and Cambridge Club, London

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Personal interests: Foreign travel including previous journeys to Bahamas, Belgium, Bermuda, Canada, China, Czechoslovakia, Dominican Republic, England, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Jordan, Monaco, Russia, Scotland, Spain, Switzerland, and Wales. An avid reader, coin collector, and oenophile. Enjoy spending time with family and friends and on the rowing machine.

Current research interest: working on a book tentatively titled, *Never the Twain Shall Meet: An Invitation for Dialogue between Theoretical Physics and Theology*. Anticipated publication, 2017.