



Association of
Independent Colleges & Universities
of Pennsylvania

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dr. Don L. Francis Honored for Contributions to Higher Education in Pennsylvania

Harrisburg, Mar. 27, 2018 – The Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania (AICUP) board members nominated and presented Dr. Don L. Francis with the Robert P. Casey Medal for Commitment to Independent Higher Education at its Annual Meeting in Hershey.

Don L. Francis has been at AICUP for more than 25 years. During Don’s tenure at the association, he represented the interests of private higher education on both state and federal levels. Don played a major role in the passage of the November 1997 of the Institutions of Purely Public Charity Act, which provides statutory protection for the tax-exemption of traditional charities such as colleges and hospitals, a revision of the state’s need-based student grant program to enhance student choice, and the enactment of a new student grant program for middle-income students.

His leadership at the association over the years has provided regular annual research studies and reports for its members, has been the voice for private higher education testifying before both state and federal government, and promotes good public policy for private higher education.

“For almost 30 years, Don has roamed the halls of the State Capitol carrying the message of the Commonwealth’s private college and universities,” said Senate Majority Leader Jake Corman. “While many things have changed significantly during those three decades, one thing has remained constant – Don’s dedication to ensuring the General Assembly is well aware of the distinct role private colleges and universities play in our higher education structure and the unique needs that go along with that.”

Don worked closely with the Pennsylvania General Assembly and AICUP’s member colleges to advocate access and affordability for students, and increase support for the private higher education sector.

“Whether it has been for funding the PHEAA student grant or for advocating for the private colleges sector, Don has always been a champion for private higher education in Pennsylvania,” incoming AICUP Board Chairwoman Barbara Mistick said. “On behalf of the AICUP board representing 90+ colleges and universities across Pennsylvania, we thank Don for his tireless work and commitment to independent higher education in Pennsylvania.”

“After spending seven years working for Governor Casey, I can say without a doubt he would have been delighted to honor Don as the recipient of this award, for his dedication to private higher education,” stated incoming AICUP President Tom Foley.

Named after former Pennsylvania Governor Robert P. Casey, who greatly strengthened need-based student aid during his tenure, the medal is reserved for individuals or foundations who work in areas outside the academy, yet have contributed their time, talent, and treasure to strengthen independent institutions of higher education in an especially meaningful way.

For more information, visit www.aicup.org, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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The Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania (AICUP), the only statewide organization that serves exclusively the interests of private higher education within the Commonwealth, exists to complement and support the work of campus leaders. With a membership of 91 private colleges and universities within Pennsylvania, the Association provides a variety of services and programs tailored specifically to the needs and situation of independent higher education. For a complete list of AICUP’s member colleges and universities, visit www.aicup.org.

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