Wallace to step down as Campbell president in June 2015

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BUIES CREEK -- Campbell University President Jerry M. Wallace, who has led Campbell to unprecedented growth and transformed the university into a destination for leading health education and other key programs over the past 11 years, announced during a April 23 meeting of the university Board of Trustees that he will step down as president on June 30, 2015. After a one-year sabbatical, he will transition to the honorary role and title of university chancellor.

“It is with a heavy heart that the Campbell University Board of Trustees accepts President Wallace’s request to transition to the chancellor’s role beginning July 1, 2016,” Benjamin N. Thompson, chair of the Campbell University Board of Trustees, said. “President Wallace’s legacy is beyond measure. His leadership has truly transformed the university’s place and image among North Carolina’s leading colleges and universities.

“We are grateful, though, that President Wallace will continue to serve Campbell, allowing us to continue to benefit from his wisdom, visionary leadership, and love for the university,” Thompson added. “The search for Campbell’s next president will begin immediately.”

Wallace, who has been on the Campbell faculty for the past 44 years, is only the fourth president in the university’s 127-year history. When introduced as president on May 29, 2003, Wallace said: “Campbell will respond to the existing and developing needs of the region, state and nation by providing new undergraduate, graduate and professional programs that complement and extend Campbell’s mission.”

Over the past 11 years as president, Wallace has guided Campbell as it has done just that. Notably, Wallace has expanded Campbell’s health programs to complement its pharmacy

school and to address the shortage of health professionals in North Carolina, including the establishment of a medical school. When the Jerry M. Wallace School of Osteopathic Medicine opened in the Leon Levine Hall of Medical Sciences in August 2013 with 160 students, it was North Carolina's first new medical school in 35 years.

Other health programs launched during Wallace's presidency include the physician assistant, public health, physical therapy, and proposed nursing programs. The Doctor of Physical Therapy program welcomed its first class of 40 students in January 2014, and the public health and physician assistant programs began in 2012 and 2011, respectively. Also, in January 2014, the N.C. Board of Nursing granted Campbell Initial Approval Status to start a Bachelor of Science in nursing program, which is expected to enroll its first cohort of 50 students in the fall of 2014.

"During my time as president, my goal has been similar to that of my predecessors—remain true to the university's founding principles and to the meet the education and professional program needs of North Carolina and our students," Wallace said.

Undergraduate enrollment has steadily increased during Wallace's time as president and now surpasses a record of more than 4,500 undergraduate students on the main Buies Creek campus and extended campuses at Fort Bragg, Camp Lejeune and RTP. The number of applicants to Campbell has also reached new highs, with more than 10,000 first-year and transfer students vying for just over 1,000 undergraduate admission spots during the 2013-14 academic year.

To accommodate more students and programs, Wallace has spearheaded a long-term university master plan that resulted in more open spaces, traffic roundabouts, landscape centerpieces and the brick thoroughfare called Fellowship Commons, as well as the addition of numerous facilities on or near the main campus in Buies Creek. New facilities include the Leon Levine Hall of Medical Sciences; John W. Pope, Jr. Convocation Center; Robert B. & Anna Gardner Butler Chapel; Dinah E. Gore Bell Tower; Ronald W. Maddox Hall of Pharmacy; Barker-Lane Stadium, home of the Fighting Camels football team; Jim Perry Stadium, home of the Camels baseball team; and Bob Barker and Pat Barker residence halls.

Wallace also led the efforts to relocate the Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law from the university's main campus in Buies Creek to downtown Raleigh, N.C., in 2009. Until that time, Raleigh was the only state capital in the southeastern U.S. without a law school. Since the relocation, the law school's enrollment has expanded, the externship program has strengthened (60 to 70 students any given semester now complete an externship), and its standings in the U.S. News & World Report rankings have jumped. Over the past two years, Campbell's law school is one of only four North Carolina programs ranked among the top tier law schools in the nation. (The others are Duke University, Wake Forest University and UNC-Chapel Hill.)

In addition, Wallace's tenure saw the return of intercollegiate football at Campbell in 2008 and the addition of a study abroad program. In the 2013-14 academic year alone, the study abroad program will have placed 118 students in nearly two-dozen countries around the world.

“When I came to Campbell as an adjunct instructor in 1970, I had no idea that one day I’d be the university’s president,” Wallace said. “It has been my greatest professional honor and personal joy to work at Campbell for 44 years and serve as president for the past 11 years.”

An ordained Baptist minister and a Rockingham, N.C., native, Wallace first joined Campbell in 1970 as an adjunct sociology professor while serving as a pastor of Elizabethtown Baptist Church. He began teaching full time at Campbell in 1975 and went on to serve the university in a variety of roles, including as chair of the Department of Religion and Philosophy, dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, director of graduate studies, and vice president for academic affairs and provost.

As the dean of the College of Arts & Sciences from 1981 to 1984 and then as provost beginning in 1984, Wallace conducted the feasibility study and spearheaded the university’s efforts to open in 1986 the first pharmacy school in the entire United States in nearly 40 years. Campbell changed the name of the pharmacy school to the College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences in 2009, reflecting the expansion of health programs Wallace oversaw during his tenure as president.

“I’m deeply appreciative to the university Board of Trustees, alumni, faculty, staff and students for their support and encouragement,” Wallace said. “I’m equally grateful to the love and support of my wife, Betty, and our children throughout my time as president. I could not have done it without them.”

Wallace earned his bachelor’s degrees in English and government from East Carolina University, his Bachelor of Divinity and Master of Theology degrees from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a Master of Science in sociology and a Doctor of Education from North Carolina State University.

His wife, Betty Blanchard Wallace, is a native of Warsaw, N.C., and earned her degree in education from Campbell in 1972. She taught kindergarten and first grade for 10 years and later served as the director of the Curriculum Materials Center at Campbell’s School of Education.

The Wallaces have three children: McLain, a two-time graduate of Wake Forest University; Kelly McLamb, a graduate of Meredith College and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro; and Betty Lynne Johnson, a graduate of Campbell and Wake Forest University and the academic coordinator of the physician assistant program and an associate professor of health professional studies at Campbell. The Wallaces also have five grandchildren: Wallace, Catherine Stuart, Elizabeth, Isaac and Ronald Joseph.

“I’m grateful for the provisions and guidance God has provided in opening doors for me and especially for Campbell University,” Wallace said. “My hope in the coming year and beyond is that Campbell will continue to produce students who are the salt of the earth and the light of the world while expanding its mission in order to meet the evolving needs of North Carolina.”

Campbell’s search for its next president will begin immediately. Board Chairman Thompson will lead a search committee that will be finalized in May 2014. The search committee plans to

engage a national executive search firm. The next president is expected to be identified by spring 2015 and assume his or her duties July 1, 2015.

“The search for Campbell’s next president will be a challenging task, but we’re in a fortunate position as President Wallace has outlined an ambitious list of goals for the next five years,” said Thompson, adding there are several major initiatives in the works, including fundraising for new facilities, developing new academic programs, and finalizing other projects.

“The Board of Trustees is deeply grateful for President Wallace’s service to Campbell over the past four decades,” he said. “We’re also deeply grateful for his commitment to ensure Campbell does not lose any momentum as it continues on a trajectory of growth while fulfilling its mission to prepare students for purposeful lives and meaningful service.”