

**American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity**

**Honors Xavier University’s President Norman C. Francis**

**At its 41st National Conference and Annual Meeting**

*The Nation’s longest-serving university president will receive the Association’s*

*“Drum Major for Justice” Award for his outstanding contributions to access, equity, diversity and excellence in higher education*

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Washington, DC - December 9, 2014. Dr. Norman C. Francis, the longest serving university president in the United States, will be honored during the 41st National Conference and Annual Meeting of the American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity (AAAED). The conference will be held on June 2 – 5, 2015 at the Marriott New Orleans in New Orleans, LA. AAAED’s annual Awards Luncheon will take place on June 3, 2015. At the luncheon, Dr. Francis will receive the association’s “Drum Major for Justice” Award.

Dr. Francis will be acknowledged for his many contributions to higher education and American society.  Francis has served as President of Xavier University since 1968 and he has also been an important civic leader in New Orleans and the state of Louisiana.   Under Francis’ leadership Xavier, which is the nation's only university that is both a Catholic and a historically Black institution, has developed into the leading university in the preparation of African-American students to pursue and earn advanced degrees in the health sciences.

Francis is himself a Xavier alumnus, who then became the first African American to earn a law degree from Loyola University in New Orleans.  After serving in the Army, he worked in the U. S. Attorney's Office in New Orleans to help integrate federal agencies.  He subsequently became active in the civil rights movement, and went on to join the Xavier administration in 1961.  He was selected by the board to become the University's president in 1968.

A nationally recognized expert in educational administration and management, Francis has served as chairman of the board of directors of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, the Educational Testing Service, the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges, and the Southern Education Foundation.  He has been a member of the board of trustees of the Catholic University of America, the board of Regents of Loyola University, and the board of directors of the National Catholic Council for Interracial Justice.  He also served as chair of the Louisiana Recovery Authority, which is the state agency in charge of planning the recovery and rebuilding of Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina.

In 2006, Francis was awarded the National Medal of Freedom by President George W. Bush, and in 2009 U. S. News and World Report named him as one of America's Best Leaders.

Don't miss this opportunity to celebrate the outstanding career of this legendary leader at the AAAED 41st National Conference and Annual Meeting. For more information about the conference and the Awards Luncheon, go to: [www.aaaedconference.org](http://www.aaaedconference.org). Proceeds from the luncheon will support the work of the Fund for Leadership, Equity, Access and Diversity (LEAD Fund), established to provide thought leadership in promoting inclusive organizations and institutions by providing research and education on issues related to diversity, social responsibility, human and civil rights.

*Founded in 1974 as the American Association for Affirmative Action (AAAA), AAAED is a national not-for-profit association of professionals working in the areas of equal opportunity, compliance and diversity. AAAED has 40 years of leadership in providing professional training to members, enabling them to be more successful and productive in their careers. It also promotes understanding and advocacy of affirmative action and other equal opportunity laws to enhance the tenets of access, inclusion and equality in employment, economic and educational opportunities. ###*