

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH
BOARD OF REGENTS
JUNE 16, 2020
J. NEIL ALEXANDER RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, J. Neil Alexander has served since 2012 as Vice-President and Dean of the School of Theology, in which capacity he has served the University of the South and the Episcopal Church with a distinction that is conspicuous and an enthusiasm that is infectious; and

WHEREAS, immediately prior to becoming Dean of the School of Theology, he served as Chancellor of the University and chair of the Board of Trustees. He thus went from being the boss's boss to having the boss as his boss; and

WHEREAS, his time of preparation as the IXth Bishop of Atlanta in a metropolitan area of six million people equipped him well for the far more demanding task of leading around 150 students, faculty, and staff at the School of Theology in the town of Sewanee; and

WHEREAS, since his teenage years he has been employed by Mother Church, serving God first through his musical gifts—gifts he demonstrates still as organist at the Christmas Eve service at the Chapel of the Apostles—and as an ordained minister and a professor to the long-term benefit of all who have heard him preside at the liturgy or preach or teach; and

WHEREAS, he overcame the disadvantages of earning his doctorate at another Episcopal seminary in which he also taught, to find his way to the School of Theology to serve first as a sabbatical replacement in the 1980s, then as a professor of preaching and liturgy and the inaugural Norma and Olan Mills Professor of Divinity in the 1990s, and then as Charles Todd Quintard Professor of Theology in the 2010s; and

WHEREAS, in his time as Dean the number of seminarians has grown while their average age has fallen, the Beecken Center has been established as a place of learning for laity and clergy across the Episcopal Church and across the generations, Education for Ministry has spread its lay education program to new parts of the world, Doctor of Ministry dissertations of the highest quality have been written, and the Church has been well served by the graduates all of these programs; and

WHEREAS, he has spent countless days over the last eight years on the road (where's the gift of bilocation when you need it?) and worked tirelessly to raise substantial funds for the School of Theology to the enormous benefit of generations of students to come; and

WHEREAS, he managed to do the unthinkable by making faculty meetings at the School of Theology fun; and

WHEREAS, he has overcome the constraints on his time that come with being Dean in order to lead from his Sewanee carrel the academic study of liturgy by publishing articles and the book

Celebrating Liturgical Time: Days, Weeks, and Seasons, and to contribute to the councils of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion; and

WHEREAS, he is a scholar-bishop who through his work at the College for Bishops has shared his wisdom and learning with those called to episcopal office; and

WHEREAS, he puts pimento cheese and baseball right after Jesus on his list of important things,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH that it does hereby convey the deep heartfelt thanks for the presence, witness, and leadership of J. Neil Alexander as Vice-President and Dean of the School of Theology. Together with the faculty of both colleges (and he is fond of reminding us that they are two colleges), staff, alumni, trustees, and the communion of Sewanee's saints here and in heaven, the Regents are grateful for all the years of service that Neil has given to the University. God has been good in sending him to us, that he might live out his apostolic ministry among us and share his apostolic blessings with us.

June 16, 2020

Robert S. Skirving
Chancellor

Reid Funston
Chair of the Board of Regents