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University of St. Thomas selects first woman president

Thomas C. Fox | Feb. 15, 2013 NCR Today

Dr. Julie Sullivan, executive vice president and provost of the University of San Diego, will become the first woman and the first lay person to serve as president of the University of St. Thomas in its 128-year history, the university announced yesterday. [1]

The St. Thomas Board of Trustees unanimously elected Sullivan, 55, to succeed Father Dennis Dease, who will retire June 30 after 22 years as 14th president of Minnesota?s largest private college or university.

A 13-member search committee of trustees and faculty and staff members unanimously recommended Sullivan to the board, which elected her during its winter meeting on the St. Paul campus. Sullivan met on several occasions with the search committee and also met privately earlier this month with more than 40 trustees, faculty members, administrators and students.

?I am thrilled and honored to be chosen,? said Sullivan, a Florida native who has taught or served in administrative positions in Oklahoma, North Carolina and California. ?St. Thomas is an outstanding university which enjoys a wonderful history and legacy that is firmly rooted in its commitment to Catholic values and the liberal arts while looking forward with an entrepreneurial spirit. It is poised to do even more ? to expand its influence and its visibility.?

Archbishop Emeritus Harry Flynn, chairman of the St. Thomas board since 1995, said Sullivan will bring excellent credentials to St. Thomas and will carry on a strong tradition nurtured by Dease.

?Our mission statement says that we seek to educate students ?to be morally responsible leaders who think critically, act wisely and work skillfully to advance the common good,? ? Flynn said. ?I see those qualities and that commitment in Julie Sullivan. She will be an outstanding president.?

Flynn added that Sullivan has provided exceptional service to San Diego, ?a Catholic university that has a great reputation and is highly respected in the local church.?

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[1] http://www.stthomas.edu/news/2013/02/14/president/