

Tulane community recalls former provost Fran Lawrence

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cjs@tulane.edu

Francis L. Lawrence, whose Tulane University career spanned 31 years from graduate student to provost before departing in 1990 to become president of Rutgers University, died on Tuesday (April 16) at his home in Mount Laurel, N.J. He was 75 years old.



Fran Lawrence left Tulane in 1990 to become president of Rutgers University, but he is well remembered for his years in New Orleans as a teacher and academic leader. (Photo by Alan Goldsmith)

Remembered as “Fran” by his Tulane colleagues, Lawrence served as the 18th president of [Rutgers](#) until 2002, when he joined the faculty and continued to teach until his full retirement in 2012.

He came to Tulane in 1959 as a graduate student and earned his Ph.D. from the Department of French and Italian in 1962.

A dynamic academic leader and teacher, he rose through the academic ranks, eventually serving as chair of that department, dean of Newcomb College, dean of the Graduate School, and academic vice president and provost in the administration

of former Tulane president Eamon Kelly.

Kelly, now a professor in the Payson Center for International Development at Tulane, says Lawrence was a good friend and an outstanding provost who made a great contribution to the university.

Under Lawrence's leadership, Kelly recalls, "There was a dramatic increase in the quality of the student body, the faculty, faculty salaries and the academic reputation of Tulane nationwide. I knew when I appointed him that he would be president of a major research university in short order."

Lawrence was a teacher, scholar and administrator who related well to all members of the Tulane community, Kelly says.

"He came out of the trenches," says Tulane history professor Rick Teichgraeber. As provost, "We considered him one of us ? a member of the faculty, who thought his role was to safeguard and promote the integrity of the faculty."

It was Lawrence who appointed Teichgraeber to be director of the [Murphy Institute](#), a position he held for 25 years. "I can't imagine that my career would be what it has been without Fran Lawrence. For all of that I remain forever grateful."