



Washington University in St. Louis

MARK STEPHEN WRIGHTON, PH.D.

*James and Mary Wertsch Distinguished University Professor
and Chancellor Emeritus*



Mark S. Wrighton, Ph.D., is the James and Mary Wertsch Distinguished University Professor and Chancellor Emeritus at Washington University in St. Louis. For almost 24 years (July 1995-May 2019), he served as the 14th Chancellor and chief executive officer of the University. In the years following his appointment, the University made significant progress in student quality, campus improvements, resource development, curriculum, and international reputation.

Wrighton also served as the President of The George Washington University (GWU) for an 18-month term from January 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023. He was granted the status of “President Emeritus” by the GWU Board of Trustees. During his time at GWU, he was on sabbatical from Washington University in St. Louis.

During Wrighton's tenure as Chancellor at Washington University, University accomplishments included a more than two-fold increase in undergraduate applications, more than 350 new endowed professorships for faculty, a redesigned Arts & Sciences curriculum, newly created programs in biomedical engineering, public health, American culture studies, and completion of more than 50 new buildings for Arts & Sciences, business, design and visual arts, engineering, law, medicine, social work, and residential life. One of the most outstanding construction projects under Wrighton's leadership was the redevelopment of the East End of the Danforth Campus.

Major programmatic initiatives during Wrighton's chancellorship include the McDonnell International Scholars Academy, the Alvin J. Siteman Cancer Center, the Gephardt Institute for Civic and Community Engagement, the Institute for Public Health, the International Center for Energy, Environment and Sustainability, and the Living Earth Collaborative. New departments include Sociology; Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies; African and African American Studies; Biomedical Engineering; and Radiation Oncology.

Two major, multi-year fundraising initiatives were conducted during Chancellor Wrighton's tenure. In 1998 the University publicly launched a billion-dollar campaign to build resources for student scholarships, professorships, other endowed program support, and new buildings. The campaign continued through 2004, surpassed its goal, and raised more than \$1.55 billion. The most recent capital campaign—*Leading Together: The Campaign for Washington University*—built on the University's strong history and further evolved its global leadership by focusing on strengthening the

University's impact in four key areas: preparing the leaders of tomorrow, advancing human health, inspiring innovation and entrepreneurship, and enhancing the quality of life. The *Leading Together* Campaign was publicly launched in October 2012 and concluded in June 2018. The Campaign exceeded its \$2.2 billion dollar goal with more than \$3.3 billion realized.

Current Appointments/Service

Wrighton currently serves on the Board of Directors of Corning Incorporated, Forest Park Forever, and is a member of the St. Louis Science Center's Board of Commissioners and President of its Board of Trustees. He also serves as: an Honorary Emeritus Trustee of Washington University in St. Louis; a Trustee of the Concordance Leadership Academy and the Institute of International Education; and he is a Member of the Corporation of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Background

Born in Jacksonville, Florida in 1949, Wrighton received his B.S. degree with honors in chemistry from Florida State University in 1969. While at Florida State, he studied under Professor Jack Saltiel and upon graduation received the Monsanto Chemistry Award for outstanding research. He did his graduate work at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) under Professors Harry B. Gray and George S. Hammond, receiving his Ph.D. in 1972. His doctoral dissertation was on "Photoprocesses in Metal-Containing Molecules." Based on his research accomplishments as a Ph.D. student, Wrighton was named the first recipient of the Herbert Newby McCoy Award at Caltech.

Wrighton started his career at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1972 as Assistant Professor of Chemistry. He was appointed Associate Professor in 1976 and Professor in 1977. From 1981 until 1989, he held the Frederick G. Keyes Chair in Chemistry. In 1989 he was appointed the first holder of the Ciba-Geigy Chair in Chemistry. He was Head of the Department of Chemistry from 1987-1990 and became Provost of MIT in 1990, a post he held until the summer of 1995.

Wrighton is the author or co-author of more than 300 articles published in professional and scholarly journals, and he holds 16 patents. He has research interests in the areas of transition metal catalysis, photochemistry, surface chemistry, molecular electronics, and in photoprocesses at electrodes. Principal objectives of his research have been to elucidate the basic principles underlying the conversion of solar energy to chemical fuels and electricity, to discern new catalysts and ways of making them, to understand chemistry at interfaces, and to provide the knowledge base for development of new electrochemical devices. With a strong commitment to mentorship, 70 individuals received the Ph.D. degree under his supervision at MIT, and numerous post-doctoral associates and visiting scientists worked with him on his research program. Wrighton has lectured widely on his research work and has given more than 40 named lectureships at distinguished colleges and universities in the United States and other countries.

Wrighton has received public recognition for his research and educational achievements in the print media. He was profiled in the September 1980 issue of *Fortune*, where his efforts in duplicating photosynthesis were highlighted. In 1984, *Science Digest* included him as one of America's brightest scientists under age 40, and

in 1985 named him one of America's top 100 innovators of the year. *U.S. News and World Report* featured Wrighton in a February 1988 cover story on "The New American Establishment," and in *Business Week's* 1989 special issue on "Innovation in America," his work on molecular electronics was summarized and he was included as one of ten innovators in science. He was included in *Esquire's* 1989 Register along with 38 other men and women "who are making America a smarter, healthier, wealthier, safer, livelier, prettier, all around more interesting place to live."

Wrighton has served on the following organizations: Chemistry Research Evaluation Panel for the Air Force Office of Scientific Research (1976-1980); IUPAC Commission on Photochemistry (1976-1983); American Physical Society Study Group on Solar Photovoltaic Energy Conversion (1977-1979); National Materials Advisory Board Study on Battery Materials (1979-1980); Defense Sciences Research Council (formerly the Materials Research Council) of the Advanced Research Projects Agency (1981-1997); Energy Research Advisory Board Solar Panel (1982); Advisory Committee of the Chemistry Division, Oak Ridge National Laboratory (1983-1985); Advisory Committee for the Chemistry Division of the National Science Foundation (1984-1987) and as chairman of the division (1986-1987); Basic Energy Sciences Advisory Committee of the Department of Energy (1986-1989); National Research Council Board on Chemical Sciences and Technology (1986-1989); Gordon Research Council (1986-1989); Governing Board of Council on Chemical Research (1988-1991); Energy Research Advisory Board Panel on Cold Fusion (1989); Science Advisory Committee of the Electric Power Research Institute (1990-1992); Materials Research Advisory Committee of the National Science Foundation (1990-1991); Advisory Committee for the Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences of the National Science Foundation (1995-1996).

Wrighton also served on Editorial Advisory Boards of the following scholarly publications: *Inorganic Chemistry* (1983-1989); *Chemical and Engineering News* (1984-1986); *Inorganica Chimica Acta* (1984-1993); *Journal of Molecular Electronics* (1985-1990); *Chemtronics* (1985-1990); *Chemistry of Materials* (1989-1993); and *Journal of Physical Chemistry* (1994-1995). He was editor of the Physical Electrochemistry Division for the *Journal of the Electrochemical Society* (1980-1983). He edited two volumes of the American Chemical Society's "Advances in Chemistry" series and served as the consulting editor for the text *General Chemistry* (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th editions) by Darrell D. Ebbing, published by Houghton Mifflin. Wrighton is the co-author of a book titled *Organometallic Photochemistry*, published in 1979 by Academic Press.

Wrighton was a director or trustee of the following organizations: Boston Museum of Science (1991-1997); Corporation of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (1991-1995); Corporation of Draper Laboratory (1994-1996); Cabot Corporation (1997-March 2021); Helix Technology (1990-2005); Brooks Automation (2005-2022); Azenta Life Sciences (2022-2023); Chemical Heritage Foundation (1998-2002); Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (1998-2002); Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis (2001-2014); National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (2002-2005); and the Saint Louis Symphony (2006-2014).

Wrighton was a presidential appointee to the National Science Board (2000-06), which serves as science policy advisor to the President and Congress and is the primary advisory board to the National Science Foundation. While on the NSB, Wrighton chaired the Audit and Oversight Committee.

Wrighton also served as Vice Chair of the National Academies' Committee on America's Energy Future (2009) and as Chair of the Committee on the Management of University Intellectual Property (2011). He also chaired the Academies' consensus study, "The Importance of Chemical Research to the U.S. Economy" (2022). He has served as chair of the Business-Higher Education Forum (BHEF) (2004-2006), which is America's leading organization that brings together a coalition of corporate, academic and foundation leaders to address issues of common interest and influence public policy. He is a past chair of the Association of American Universities (AAU) (2004-2005) and the Consortium on Financing Higher Education (COFHE) (2000-2001).

Awards and Honors

Wrighton was awarded an Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellowship (1974-1976) and was the recipient of a Dreyfus Teacher-Scholar Grant (1975-1980). From the American Chemical Society, he received the Pure Chemistry Award in 1981 and the Award in Inorganic Chemistry in 1988. In 1983 he was awarded a MacArthur Prize Fellowship. Also in 1983, he received the Gregory and Freda Halpern Award in Photochemistry by the New York Academy of Sciences and the E. O. Lawrence Award by the United States Department of Energy. In 1984, he was selected as the recipient of the Fresenius Award of Phi Lambda Upsilon. Wrighton's teaching activities have been rewarded with the MIT Chemistry Department Graduate Teaching Award in 1981 and the MIT School of Science Teaching Prize in 1987.

Wrighton received an Honorary Doctor of Science Degree from the University of West Florida in 1983, an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Florida State University in 2007, an Honorary Doctorate from Harris Stowe State University in 2009, an Honorary Doctorate from Fudan University (Shanghai, China) in 2010, and an Honorary Doctor of Philosophy Degree from The Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya in 2019. He was the recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award from Caltech in 1992. He was named an Honorary Professor at Shandong University in Jinan, China (2002) and at Xidian University in Xi'an China (2019). He has delivered commencement addresses at Caltech (1995), Florida State University (2007), and Harris Stowe State University (2009).

Wrighton was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (1986), the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (1988), and the National Academy of Inventors (2013). In 2001, he was elected to membership in the American Philosophical Society.

The Eastern Missouri Chapter of the Arthritis Foundation named Chancellor Wrighton "Humanitarian of the Year 2000." He was selected as the St. Louis "Citizen of the Year" in 2007—an annual award presented by the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. For his outstanding contributions to both Washington University and the St. Louis region, Wrighton

was chosen as the 2010 winner of the “Right Arm of St. Louis Award”—the most prestigious individual honor conferred by the St. Louis Regional Chamber.

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