

News Release



For Immediate Release
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JOHN J. HURLEY ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT AS PRESIDENT OF CANISIUS COLLEGE

Buffalo, NY - John J. Hurley, the 24th president of Canisius College, announced today he will retire at the end of the upcoming academic year after serving 12 years as president. Hurley will remain in office until June 30, 2022. A search committee will be formed by the college's Board of Trustees to conduct a national search for Hurley's successor.

Hurley is currently the longest tenured president among Western New York colleges and universities. He joined Canisius in August 1997 as vice president for college relations and general counsel, after practicing law in Chicago and Buffalo for 16 years. In 2009, the college's Board of Trustees selected Hurley to succeed Rev. Vincent M. Cooke, S.J. and he became the college's first lay president in July 2010.

"The upcoming year will be my 12th as president and 25th overall at Canisius," said Hurley. "It has truly been a labor of love for an institution that means everything to me. But, having just turned 65 and having led the college safely and successfully through the Covid-19 pandemic, it's time to step down and move on to the next phase in my life. Everything that we have done over the past 12 years has been aimed at positioning Canisius to thrive in a disrupted higher education landscape. The stage is set for the next president to take Canisius to a whole new level of excellence."

Since becoming president, Hurley has led Canisius through a series of bold, comprehensive strategic assessments of academic programs and administrative functions aimed at enhancing academic excellence and the student experience, while stabilizing the college's financial position.

"John has done such an outstanding job at Canisius," said Lee C. Wortham, who has served as chair of the college's Board of Trustees for the past four years. "His foresight and focus have positioned Canisius well for the future. His tenure is notable not only for many strategic,

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programmatic and student-centered accomplishments but also, importantly, for the manner in which he has led. John epitomizes the Jesuit value of men and women for and with others; service is a life priority for him.”

Since 2010, Canisius has introduced or modified more than 50 undergraduate, graduate and certificate programs, many in online or hybrid formats, to meet student needs and interests and respond to market demands. Under Hurley’s direction, Canisius took its first steps into the allied health field, a process four years in the making, with its introduction of a Physician Assistant Studies program in 2021. He also placed special emphasis on the development of creative professional and personal development courses to advance life-long learning. Canisius also introduced high-demand, data-driven graduate programs in Data Analytics, Cybersecurity, Finance, and Business Analytics.

As president, he oversaw the successful development and execution of two strategic plans, *A Transformational Education* (approved in 2011) and *Canisius 150: Excellence, Leadership, Jesuit* (approved in 2016), that built upon Canisius’ commitment to academic excellence, Jesuit values of social justice, and innovation. The latter also saw the completion of a new Facilities Master Plan and the college’s first-ever plans for Environmental Sustainability and Racial Equity and Inclusion.

Throughout his tenure, Hurley has placed a special emphasis on the college’s connection to the City of Buffalo. He created the Employer Assisted Housing (EAH) program to provide forgivable loans to employees who purchase homes in the city of Buffalo, and the Hamlin Park Initiative designed to refurbish and return college-owned homes in the Hamlin Park neighborhood to buyers who agreed to be owner-occupiers. Most recently, he announced the establishment of the New Buffalo Institute at Canisius to align the college’s extensive outreach activities toward defined areas of focus to address the persistent challenges and injustices in the community, with an emphasis on the East Side of Buffalo.

Hurley oversaw the completion of *Imagine Canisius*, the largest capital campaign which concluded in 2000 with \$38.8 million raised, surpassing the goal by \$8.8 million. He led the college’s comprehensive fundraising campaign, *A Legacy of Leadership: The Campaign for Canisius College*, which

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concluded in 2012 with a record \$95.5 million raised. Today, the college's endowment stands at \$160 million, more than double its \$74.4 million value in 2010. Hurley has been at the helm of transformative investments in the campus footprint, including the development of Science Hall and the Library Learning Commons, and significant expansion of endowments for financial aid scholarships and programs, and academic innovation.

Hurley has long been recognized within the Jesuit network and among Catholics as a layperson with an extraordinary depth of understanding of Catholic and Jesuit mission and identity. He has written and spoken extensively on the topic.

“It is said that the perfect Jesuit graduate is a person whose life is marked by character, competence, conscience, compassion and commitment to the cause of the Gospel,” said Rev. Joseph M. McShane, S.J., president of Fordham University and a four-term member of the Canisius Board of Trustees. “John Hurley is all of that, and more. From a Jesuit's point of view, he is a revered and admired "companion in mission." John has been an indefatigable fundraiser, an eloquent ambassador and a very nearly perfect embodiment of the values that have always defined Canisius and its graduates. I know that I speak for all of the presidents of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities when I say that he is a wisdom figure to whom we always turn for sage advice and unstinting support.”

Prior to his appointment as president, Hurley served as executive vice president of Canisius from 2007 to 2010 and vice president for college relations from 1997 to 2010. In these positions, he played a significant leadership role in the college's investment in the campus, which now totals more than \$185 million over the past 25 years.

A native of Buffalo, Hurley is a graduate of St. Benedict's Elementary School, St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute, Canisius College (BA 1978 *summa cum laude*, English/history) and the University of Notre Dame Law School (JD 1981). Prior to coming to Canisius, he practiced law for 16 years, three in Chicago and 13 with Phillips, Lytle LLP in Buffalo concentrating his practice in the areas of secured lending, bankruptcy and insolvency.

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Hurley served on the board of Fidelis Care New York, a health maintenance organization formed by the bishops of the state of New York that serves the poor in New York that was sold in 2018 to Centene Corp for \$4.6 billion. He was a board member of the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities and the Buffalo Niagara Partnership, president of the St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute Board of Trustees, chair of Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME), trustee of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and Nardin Academy, member of the NCAA President's Advisory Group, and president of the Buffalo Club. He was a member of the City of Buffalo's Charter Revision Commission in 1999-2000 and later served as a member of the City's Citizens Planning Council.

In October 2018, Hurley and his wife, Maureen, and seven other Catholic lay people in the Diocese of Buffalo formed The Movement to Restore Trust to develop a lay response to the Catholic Church's handling of the clergy abuse crisis in the Diocese.

Inducted as a Distinguished Alumnus of Canisius College in 2002, Hurley is also a recipient of the college's LaSalle Medal (1996). St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute inducted him into its Signum Fidei Society (1998) and the University of Notre Dame presented him with its Exemplar Award (1997). He has received HOME's James Crawford Award (1990) and the Director's Award (1997) for outstanding service to the cause of fair housing. In 2012, Christ the King Seminary conferred an honorary degree upon Hurley. In 2019, the St. Thomas More Guild in Buffalo presented him with its St. Thomas More Award in recognition of his work on the Catholic Church clergy abuse scandal.

One of 27 Jesuit universities in the nation, Canisius is the premier private university in Western New York. Canisius prepares leaders - intelligent, caring, faithful individuals - able to pursue and promote excellence in their professions, their communities and their service to humanity.