

Approved by the Board of Trustees
May 7, 2015

Board Meeting
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AWARD THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES' DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDALLION

Dr. Robert A. Easter will forever hold a special place in the long, rich history of the University of Illinois.

Over the course of his nearly 40-year career, his contributions to the University are unmatched and his loyalty has become legendary. Dr. Easter has shared his talents as a faculty member, department head, dean, interim provost, interim chancellor, interim vice chancellor for research and, ultimately, as the 19th president of the University of Illinois, the only person since the University's founding to serve in each of those critical roles.

His service was driven by an unwavering devotion to the University that stands as one of the many hallmarks of his distinguished career. He delayed retirement to step in as interim provost and then interim chancellor. He became president after he retired, as he answered calls for help from a University that needed his wisdom and steady hand during difficult times.

Dr. Easter's roots at the University extend beyond his career – to 1973, when he arrived on the Urbana campus to pursue a doctorate in animal sciences and forged a connection that has endured for more than four decades. After graduating in 1976, he immediately joined the faculty of Urbana's Department of Animal Sciences and

has remained a faculty member throughout his career. He holds the title of Professor Emeritus, recognizing a celebrated career that made him an internationally acclaimed expert in livestock feeding and transformed the lives of generations of students. His skills in the classroom and laboratory paved the way to his rise in University leadership.

Dr. Easter's lifelong service has played an invaluable role in the University's standing as a world leader in education and innovation, and reflects the qualities that its campuses seek to instill in every graduate. He is an exceptional scholar and visionary leader, with integrity and a moral compass that have steered the University through troubled times toward a bright future. But he is remembered just as much for his kindness, his thoughtfulness, his loyalty and his deep affection for the University, its many stakeholders and its global legacy.

With his wife, Cheryl, Bob Easter served the University of Illinois tirelessly and selflessly, often putting the University's interests ahead of their own.

At a press conference on his first day as president, Dr. Easter was asked about his commitment to the University and why he kept coming out of retirement to serve. The answer, he said, was simple: "I've always been proud to say 'I'm Bob Easter, of the University of Illinois.'"

The Board of Trustees and the entire University family are just as proud of him. For his career of dedication and exemplary service to our University and to honor one who led with distinction, the trustees award the Distinguished Service Medallion to Robert A. Easter, with gratitude and admiration.