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H. RAY HOOPS APPOINTED PRESIDENT OF USI

H. Ray Hoops, vice chancellor for Academic Affairs at the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss), has been named president of the University of Southern Indiana in Evansville, Indiana.

His appointment was approved Thursday evening by the USI Board of Trustees. He will be the second USI president, succeeding Dr. David L. Rice whose 27-year tenure ends with his retirement at the end of June. Hoops, 54, will assume the position July 1.

Bruce Baker, chair of the USI Board, said the trustees were impressed with the qualifications of all three finalists who visited the campus the past two weeks. "The overall quality of the pool of applicants, the diligent work of the 23-member search and screen committee, and the careful assessment of the finalists by campus and constituent groups in the community all were important components of the process which has led the board to its decision," Baker said.

"From the beginning," he added, "when the search and screen committee helped to draft the qualities sought in the next president, we have been mindful in our assessment that we find the candidate with the greatest strengths for the campus at this point in its development. In this candidate we have found the skills, leadership, and management experience we need to lead the University and continue its remarkable development.

"Dr. Hoops met each of our criteria in academic leadership, management, shared governance, resource development, student life, and community relations," Baker continued. "We feel fortunate to have attracted a field of such talented candidates, and to have found an excellent match between USI's needs and this candidate's abilities."

Dr. Hoops, in interviews during his USI visit this week, indicated a priority will be finding private and grant funding to supplement the University's state support, having noted that higher education has been on a "collision course with financial reality" for decades. He said colleges must find ways to increase efficiency, explore additional ways to deliver education, and look to expand all possible support for the schools over the next decade.

Dr. Hoops said also that USI does not need much in the way of change, that the University "is known across the country as an institution in a growth mode . . . one of the institutions that enjoys the greatest community support in the nation." These are two assets a university can't buy, even with unlimited funds, Dr. Hoops said, adding "I want to continue the progress and hopefully accelerate it by building on past success."

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The new president has been vice chancellor for Academic Affairs at Ole Miss since 1988. It is a state university with schools of medicine, law, engineering, and pharmacy and offers a broad range of doctoral programs. He previously served three years as associate vice chancellor for Academic Affairs for the Oregon State System of Higher Education (OSSHE).

Dr. Hoops also was president of South Dakota State University and vice president for Academic Affairs at North Dakota State University. In the mid-70s he was dean of the Graduate College at the University of Northern Iowa and before that, was associate director of the Office of Grants and Contracts Administration and professor of communicative disorders at Wayne State University.

Dr. Hoops gained national recognition for his work as chair of Committee '95, a 35-member committee of educators from elementary, secondary, and higher education institutions that looked at graduation standards, higher education admissions standards, enhanced minority access, enhanced cooperation between the three educational systems, development of alternative funding sources, and development of alternative education strategies. The committee developed Project '95, a blueprint for education in the State of Mississippi for the 1990s. It received praise within and beyond state boundaries and was awarded the State Council of Governments' Innovations Award in 1991.

Dr. Hoops' record for cultural and racial diversity at Ole Miss has been documented by a 50 percent increase in the number of minority faculty, appointment of the first female dean in the history of the institution, and a program which has increased the number of full-time minority graduate students from seven to 366 in a four-year period.

Dr. Hoops received a Ph.D. in audiology and speech sciences from Purdue University in 1966, an M.B.A. from Moorhead State University in 1985, an M.S. from Purdue University in 1964, and an undergraduate degree at Eastern Illinois University in 1962.

Dr. Hoops began his career as an educator at Wayne State and during his eight years there, received a Master Teacher Award from the students and was promoted to associate and full professor within a six-year period. He held three appointments in addition to the professorship -- director of the Office of Education Division of Marketing with the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; Senior Fulbright-Hays research scholar for the College of Medicine, University of the Philippines; and associate director of the Wayne State Office of Grants and Contracts Administration.

Dr. Hoops and his wife Rosalinda, a hotel and restaurant management consultant, are parents of a daughter, Victoria Elize, a finance major at Ole Miss.

The University of Southern Indiana, established in 1965, is a comprehensive public university with a Board of Trustees appointed by the governor of Indiana. The University offers more than 60 majors through the schools of Business, Education and Human Services, Liberal Arts, Nursing and Health Professions, and Science and Engineering Technology and is authorized to confer degrees through the master's level.

USI serves more than 7,500 students annually in credit programs and an equal number of students in noncredit and community service programs. It is located on a 300-acre campus near Evansville, a metropolitan area of 279,000.