



ROBERT L. CAROTHERS
Freedom Area Class of 1960

“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.”

John F. Kennedy

Dr. Robert Carothers graduated from Freedom Area High School in 1960. Upon commencing from Freedom, he enrolled in Edinboro State College, where he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in English in 1965. While at Edinboro, Carothers served twice as president of his fraternity, Delta Sigma Phi. He went on to earn his PhD. at Kent State University in 1969 and his Juris Doctorate from the McDowell School of Law at the University of Akron in 1980.

Carothers served as President of Southwest Minnesota State University from 1983 to 1986 and then as Chancellor of the Minnesota State University System from 1986 to 1991. In 1991 he was appointed to the Presidency of the University of Rhode Island, a position he was to hold for eighteen years. During his tenure as the tenth President of Rhode Island, he instituted a series of progressive changes to the university’s structure, infrastructure, and curriculum. Among his many achievements was the University’s being named a 2004 Truman Foundation Honor Institution. This was the first public university in New England to receive the honor and one of three selected nationally.

Carothers has worked extensively in the areas of alcohol and drug abuse, civil rights, and non-violence. He has championed causes of minorities and women. In 1991 he established the first President’s Commission on the Status of Women and implemented a series of steps intended to advance the progress of women at URI. In 2002 he completed three years of service on the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism’s Committee on Campus Drinking, which culminated with the publication of a research agenda for the nation. He was one of six university presidents to serve on the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Drug Prevention Presidential Leadership Group.

In April 2007 Carothers began his three-year tenure of chairman of the Council of Presidents of the Global U8 Consortium, a group of eight universities from around the world formed to address emerging issues confronting the global community.

Carothers has garnered numerous awards and distinctions throughout his career. He received lifetime achievement awards from the American Council on Education, the New England Board of Higher Education, the Urban League, and many others. He is the recipient of the Robert F. Goodrich Distinguished Public Service Award, the President's Leadership Award from the National Institute for Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, the Jeanne Clery Campus Security Award, and the Rhode Island Historical Society's History Maker Award.

Since 2010 Carothers has been a member of the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education. He also has been active on the boards of many civic and professional organizations, including the Leadership Council of the American Council on Education, Citizens Bank, the National Conference for Community and Justice, and the Rhode Island Economic Policy Council.

Currently, Carothers is President Emeritus and Distinguished University Professor at the University of Rhode Island, where he teaches courses in leadership.

He and his wife Jayne reside in Kingston, Rhode Island.