

Dr. John J. Cavan Named President Emeritus By VCCS

Former Southside Virginia Community College President Dr. John J. Cavan has been granted president emeritus status by the Virginia State Board for Community Colleges. The honor was awarded in recognition of his more than three decades of service as SVCC president and for his exceptional leadership, innovation and service to education in Virginia.

Nominated for the honor by the SVCC Local Board, candidates for this status must have provided ten or more years of outstanding, distinguished and honorable service to the VCCS. The appointment of President Emeritus is for life.

Current SVCC President Dr. Al Roberts said, "In his 31 plus years as president, Dr. Cavan set the groundwork and directed a course toward SVCC's continued success and prosperity. Dr. Cavan often spoke of Southside as "democracy's college" and was committed to creating a culture of higher education across Southside Virginia. I consider myself privileged to have served with him for more than 20 years and I am grateful for his mentorship and support.

According to the letter of nomination, "When Dr. Cavan took the helm in 1983, there were rumors of closing the college but he accepted the challenge and by 1986, headcount had increased by 47 percent. Through tenacity and hard work, he set about the task of serving the underserved and building a strong tradition of education for the largest service region in the Virginia Community College System."

Under Cavan's Leadership, there were many accomplishments including:

- The opening of six off-campus centers to take education to the people in their community
- Starting practical and associate degree nursing programs at the college
- Opening the door for a Truck Driver Training School along with Diesel Tech Program
- Securing the first new construction since the 70s on the campuses with the Workforce Development Centers and later, the Learning Resources and Student Services Building on the Daniel Campus

- Dr. Cavan also oversaw the implementation of the Dual Enrollment Program that involved many area high school students in college
- He was also an advocate for the Campus Within Walls program offering education to inmates in local prisons

He served as President from 1983 until 2014.