

RECOMMENDATION FOR SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENT

Recommendation

President M. Roy Wilson recommends that, upon his retirement from the University, Louis Lessem be designated as Vice President and General Counsel Emeritus.

Background

The designation of an emeritus title is not one that the University issues often. It is reserved for individuals who have demonstrated significant and long-lasting contributions to the institution. In the history of Wayne State University, the designation of emeritus for members of the administration, other than President, has only been awarded a few times. It is clear from reviewing Mr. Lessem's contributions to and impact on the University that such a designation is warranted.

Louis Lessem joined the University in 1988 as Assistant General Counsel. His talent and leadership were recognized as he was given progressively more and more responsibility, culminating with being named Vice President and General Counsel in 1997, a position he has held for the past 24 years. His tenure has been marked by many impressive and monumental achievements which protected and upheld Wayne State's status in the community and around the world. A sample of those include:

- Minimizing lawsuits against the University by almost 40% since joining Wayne State
- Forming a successful legal team who has prevailed in 75% of all claims
- Navigating numerous complex litigation matters, including those involving First Amendment issues, multi-party real estate transactions, class actions, and the School of Medicine
- Supporting legal matters during the successful negotiation of pivotal agreements related to campus housing, Wayne Health and Wayne Pediatrics, the establishment of the Mike Ilitch School of Business and the partnership with the Detroit Pistons to build the new Wayne State Fieldhouse, to name just a few.

Mr. Lessem has served the senior leadership of the institution with sage advice and wisdom, having worked with 5 University Presidents, and as counsel to the Board of Governors over this same 24 year period. He has mentored at least three university attorneys who have served under him and moved on to become general counsel elsewhere. This desire to have those around him learn, grow and advance to greater heights is a testament to his leadership priorities and acumen in the legal profession. Beyond his legal and leadership contributions, Lou has been a trusted colleague to many who have served the university, and a deep well of helpful and historical information.

The University has been extremely well-served by his service to it. The actions he has undertaken, and the safeguards he has implemented, will have a long-lasting positive impact, and are a model for those serving in this role.