

cont. from front page

President Lee Royce announces retirement from MC

ing work the past fifteen years, and the job they will continue through the remainder of his presidency.

Royce served as president at Baptist-affiliated Anderson University in South Carolina before becoming MC's leader in 2002. At the time, enrollment stood at 3,200 students. And there are nearly 5,200 students enrolled today, including more than 400 at MC Law in downtown Jackson. There were just nine international students when he arrived. In 2017, there are more than 300 students from nearly forty nations as MC greatly expanded its global outreach.

What began as a \$65 million "Growing the Vision" campaign ended up raising \$87 million for scholarships, facilities, a bigger endowment and academic needs. Under his watch, the school budget of \$38.7 million in 2002 grew to \$75.5 million, or nearly doubled. The MC endowment shot up from \$36 million to \$80.9 million. The percentage of faculty rose by 38 percent to climb to 213 during his tenure.

Summing up the many accomplishments of Dr. Royce in a few short sentences is a difficult task, but his solid character as a Christian was always evident, supporters say.

"He's truly an authentic Christian gentleman whose leadership abilities are unsurpassed in terms of encouraging others, from students to faculty and staff," said Ron Howard, vice president for academic affairs.

Serving so closely with Dr. Royce at his office a few feet away in Nelson Hall has been a blessing for Dr. Howard and other colleagues.

"This is an emotional thing for the people that served with him. He's the real deal."

Howard says dramatic advances during his administration should

note the work of Team Royce, including the president's wife, Rhoda.

"You can't overstate her contributions to his successes."

Rhoda Royce was among the daily tutors to Clinton children at a nearby apartment complex along with MC students. She joined the president at many notable MC events, from athletic events to concerts, and hosted numerous receptions at their home. She taught as a part-time instructor for many years.

Dr. Royce, who earned three degrees from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, came to the MC campus fifteen years ago amid tough times for the university. He immediately went to work to strengthen MC finances, boost enrollment and drive the university to stronger partnerships with Clinton and metro Jackson. An annual MC Spring Scholarship Dinner attracting nationally prominent leaders, including former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and former Florida Governor Jeb Bush, has generated more than \$3 million for scholarships since 2008. Dr. Royce strongly endorsed MC's move to NCAA Division II athletics and re-joining the Gulf South Conference in seventeen sports.

With Royce making his announcement, the MC Board of Trustees will launch a national search for a new leader for the Christian university. A new president is expected to be on board by next fall. But finding somebody with all the superlatives of Dr. Royce, including his wonderful sense of humor, won't be easy. Said Howard: "Dr. Royce will never be replaced."

The announcement came as Clinton teachers, coaches and staff convened on the Clinton campus for their annual convocation. About 64 percent of the Clinton Public School District's employees are graduates

Advancements since Dr. Lee Royce became MC's president include:

| | 2002 | 2017 | % Change |
|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------|
| Budget | \$38,779,781 | \$75,584,019 | +95% |
| Degree Programs | 105 | 158 | +50% |
| Endowment | \$36,369,220 | \$80,942,681 | +123% |
| Full-Time Faculty | 154 | 213 | +38% |
| Headcount | 3,227 | 5,200 | +61% |
| Long-Term Debt | \$63,074,466 | \$17,459,450 | -72% |
| Net Assets | \$101,996,848 | \$181,148,446 | +78% |
| Total Full-Time Employees | 447 | 547 | +22% |

of Mississippi College. It remains one of the state's best districts. The MC relationship with the Clinton district runs deep, as does the university's strong partnership with the Clinton community. It's something President Royce emphasized during his presidency from day one.

Royce's outstanding leadership has been recognized in the metro Jackson area – he was named Clinton's outstanding citizen of the year and was saluted by the Council for the Advancement & Support of Education as the District III chief executive of the year in the Southeast region.

In his email to the MC family, Dr.

Royce also thanked the Mississippi Baptist Convention for their tremendous support of the institutions over the years. He noted that over 1,100 MC students made first-time professions of faith in Christ since 2002.

MC School of Business Dean Marcelo Eduardo speaks for many when he said that Dr. Royce's "leadership and its impact on the university will be felt for generations. His leadership and financial stewardship have been decisive."

Lee and Rhoda Royce intend to retire living near their son, Mark Royce, who is a college teacher in northern Virginia.

Cruzin' Clinton car show is now open for entrants

Special to The Clinton Courier

Main Street Clinton's "Cruzin' Clinton" Car Show is scheduled for Saturday, September 16, and is open for registration of all makes and models of vehicles.

The show will begin at 9 a.m. with the popular car parade from Clinton Plaza Shopping Center through town,

followed by the show in Olde Towne from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m.

Pre-registration is \$20, and on-site registration will be \$25. Individuals interested in entering a car can register at www.mainstreetclintonms.com/cruzin or call 601-924-5472 for more information.


There will be no admission fee for the public to view the cars.



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Save the Date.

The Raymond Chamber of Commerce would like to announce our 35th Annual Raymond Country Fair on The Square coming up Saturday, September 9th, from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm, in collaboration with Hinds Community College, celebrating their 100th year of Inspired Service.

Mark your calendars and tell your friends!

For more information, or if you are interested in having a booth, please go to the chamber website www.RaymondChamber.org for more details and vendor application.