



PRESS RELEASE: African-American Graduate of Ferris State Selected Board of Trustees Chair

Sandy C Gholston to: Archive

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Included below is a press release regarding Ronald E. Snead Sr., of Greenville (Mich.), being elected as chair of Ferris State University's Board of Trustees. Snead is just the first African American graduate to earn this distinction and second African American overall to serve as board chair. Any questions or requests for additional information can be directed to Sandy Gholston, interim assistant director for News Services/Social Media Public Relations. We would be happy to assist in any way. For your convenience, attached below is a mugshot of Mr. Snead.

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African-American Graduate of Ferris State Selected Board of Trustees Chair

BIG RAPIDS – Ronald E. Snead Sr., who has been actively engaged in the Ferris State University community for more than 40 years, was recently named chair of the Ferris Board of Trustees. As a result, Snead, of Greenville, becomes the first African-American graduate of Ferris and the second African American to chair the board.

Snead, who was elected chair Nov. 5 and presided at his first board meeting on Dec. 17, said, "I am honored to have been selected to chair the Ferris State University Board of Trustees. Ferris has been a part of my life for more than four decades. I will continue to support the university and President David Eisler in all aspects of student achievement and our efforts to be competitive in every aspect of academic excellence."

He said his priorities as board chair include diversifying faculty and staff, improving student retention and graduation rates, and maintaining strong fiscal management.

Snead was first appointed to the board in 2005 by Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm and will complete an eight-year term as a trustee in 2012. He has had the honor of working with nine of the university's 18 presidents since his days as an undergraduate to the present.

"We cannot turn our state and country around without education," Snead explained. "We need to work collaboratively – at the university level and community level – to continue fostering initiatives that make Ferris State an inclusive and diverse educational institution that will meet Michigan's need for an increased knowledge base."

Jim Haveman of Grand Haven, a former board chair who served as director of Community Health under former Michigan Gov. John Engler, said, "As chairman, Ron Snead leads with

compassion and clear expectations of accountability and excellence from students, alumni, faculty, the administration and board of trustees. His goals as chairman will lead Ferris State University into the next decade as students graduate and help move Michigan forward.”

Snead earned a degree in Biology/Pre-medicine in 1971 after a successful career as a student of what was then Ferris State College. He was on campus during the turbulent 1960s when racial unrest and student discourse was prevalent. As president of Ferris State College’s NAACP student chapter, he was a highly visible and sought-out voice during a period of unsettled relations between students and the university’s administration. His direct involvement led to resolution of the racial unrest that took place at the university in 1969. He was active in several academic and social fraternities, served as vice president of the All-College Student Government and was named to *Who’s Who Among Students* .

A 1995 Ferris Distinguished Alumnus Award recipient, Snead is a former member of The Ferris Foundation and Jim Crow Museum boards and has served on several university search committees. He continues to support minority merit scholarship initiatives.

At the state level, he has been on the board of the Girl Scouts in Western Michigan, second vice chair of the Michigan State Conference of NAACP chapters for 10 years and governor-appointed to the panel that selected 16 draft boards in West Michigan.

Snead has spent most of his professional career working in senior management positions in Michigan, including vice president of corporate relations with Dixien, a metal stampings and plastic molded parts supplier to the automotive industry; and manager or consultant for Smith Industries, General Dynamics, AM General, Maybee Associates, Trumark, Inc., Thomas Madison, Inc. and Vibrations Controls Technologies.

Snead and his wife, Deloris, a Remus native, have two sons, Ronald Jr. and Jon, and five grandchildren. Although Snead currently resides in Greenville, he was raised in Grand Rapids and is a 1961 graduate of Ottawa Hills High School.

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