

**ROBERT T. TAD PERRY**  
**Citation for the Regents' Honorary Degree of**  
**Doctor of Public Service**

In recognition of extraordinary service and leadership to the South Dakota system of public higher education, the South Dakota Board of Regents awards its highest honor, an honorary doctorate in public service, to Dr. Robert T. Tad Perry.

Dr. Perry's 15 years as chief executive officer for the South Dakota Board of Regents stands as the longest record of service by any state higher education executive officer in the country. He leaves the system leadership role at a time when public universities in South Dakota are serving a record number of students, conducting record levels of research, and raising a record of nearly \$500 million in private funds across all six universities.

During his tenure, there has been significant growth in service to non-traditional students, increases in graduate degree offerings and research programs, and enhancement of the technology environment for all students. Dr. Perry instituted policies designed to make salaries more competitive for faculty and administrators, and led efforts to consolidate back-office functions among the six universities, upgrade campus facilities, and guide the transition of South Dakota State University and The University of South Dakota to Division I athletics.

Dr. Perry was instrumental in creating the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship in 2004, which to date has supported more than 5,000 students and provides a financial incentive for students to take a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum and remain in South Dakota for their postsecondary education. He created the Reinvestment through Efficiencies Program, which redirected 10 percent of state resources to higher policy priorities, as well as the only public university system-required proficiency examination in the nation. On his watch, remedial coursework among entering freshmen in the South Dakota public university system decreased from 34 percent to 26 percent, while student retention increased from 67 percent to 75 percent.

During his public service in South Dakota, he has worked with 27 regents and 25 institutional executives; he was involved in the recruitment and selection of 17 of those institutional leaders. He has provided outstanding leadership in many higher education organizations, among them as chair of the State Higher Education Executive Officers and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education and as secretary-treasurer for the National Association of System Heads. He also served on the executive committees of the Education Commission of the States and the Midwestern Higher Education Compact.

In recognition thereof, the South Dakota Board of Regents, on behalf of the citizens of South Dakota, bestows upon Dr. Robert T. Tad Perry the degree of Honorary Doctor of Public Service, and title of Chancellor Emeritus, reserved for individuals whose exceptional personal and professional contributions merit special acknowledgement.