



PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY

A Member of The Texas A&M University System

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Higher Education Icon Ruth J. Simmons to be Installed as the Eighth President of Prairie View A&M University

Dr. Simmons has the distinction of being the first woman to lead the institution in its 142-year history.

Prairie View, TEXAS— Ruth J. Simmons, a leading figure in higher education and the first African American to serve as president of an Ivy League institution, will be officially invested as the eighth president of Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) Friday, April 20, 2018. The Inauguration and Investiture ceremony, themed “A compelling legacy, a bright future” will celebrate PVAMU’s rich history and progressive future. Activities will begin at 1:30 p.m. in Panther Stadium, and will include a formal procession of trustees, distinguished guests, and faculty and staff, with a community reception following the ceremony.

The venerable Walter Massey, Chancellor of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), has been tapped to serve as the Inauguration speaker.

“Knowing that someone of Dr. Simmons’ caliber is at the helm of Prairie View A&M fills me with tremendous confidence in the university’s future,” said Texas A&M University System Chancellor John Sharp. “We will look back on this inauguration as a pivotal moment in Prairie View’s history.”

Inauguration University Showcase:

Pre-ceremony events include open houses of all PVAMU colleges and the School of Architecture. These showcases will feature student work and research as well as faculty demonstrations and new technology used in the classroom.

-cont.-

Scholars' Voices Symposium:

Prominent African American scholars including: Paula Giddings, Elizabeth A. Woodson '22 Professor Emerita of Africana Studies, Smith College; Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Anna Julia Cooper Professor of Women's Studies and English, Spelman College; and Melanye Price, Associate Professor of Africana Studies, Rutgers University along with symposium moderator, W. Gabriel Selassie I, Ralph Bunche Associate Professor of U.S. History and African American Studies, Los Angeles Community College will host A Study of African American Culture and History in the HBCU Curriculum symposium.

About Ruth J. Simmons:

Prior to joining Prairie View A&M University in July 2017 as Interim President, Ruth J. Simmons was President and Professor of Comparative Literature and Africana Studies at Brown University from 2001-2012. Under her leadership, Brown made significant strides in improving its standing as one of the world's finest research universities.

After completing her Ph.D. in 1973 in Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard University, she served in various faculty and administrative roles at the University of Southern California, Princeton University, and Spelman College before her appointment in 1999 as President of Smith College, the largest women's college in the United States. She launched a number of important academic initiatives at Smith, including an engineering program, the first at an American women's college.

Simmons is the recipient of many honors, including a Fulbright Fellowship to France, the 2001 President's Award from the United Negro College Fund, the 2002 Fulbright Lifetime Achievement Medal, the 2004 Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Medal, the Foreign Policy Association Medal, and the Centennial Medal from Harvard University. Simmons is a member of the National Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, and the Council on Foreign Relations. She serves on the boards of FCAU, NV, and Square, as well as a number of non-profit boards, including the Smithsonian National Museum of African-American History and Culture, the Holdsworth Center, Rice University, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Awarded numerous honorary degrees, in 2011, she received the Brown faculty's highest honor: the Susan Colver Rosenberger Medal. In 2012, the president of France named her a 'chevalier' of the French Legion of Honor.

Inauguration Events:

The dress for the Inauguration is casual. The University Showcases and the Symposium are free and open to the public. All are welcome to attend the Investiture ceremony and community reception.

For information about the event, details can be found at www.pvamu.edu/inauguration.

Contact:

To register for a media credential, please visit:

<https://www.pvamu.edu/inauguration/media/>

For Media Credentials or additional questions,

Candace Johnson, Executive Director for Marketing and Communications

Phone: (936) 261-1566

E-mail: [cajohnson@pvamu.edu](mailto:cjohnson@pvamu.edu)

or

Yolanda Bevill, Assistant to the President and Assistant Vice President for Marketing and Communications

Phone: (936) 261-2121

E-mail: ydbevill@pvamu.edu

About Prairie View A&M University:

Designated an institution of “the first class” in the Texas Constitution, Prairie View A&M University is the second-oldest public institution of higher education in the state. With an established reputation for producing engineers, nurses and educators, PVAMU offers baccalaureate degrees, master’s degrees and doctoral degree programs through nine colleges and schools. A member of The Texas A&M University System, the university is dedicated to fulfilling its land-grant mission of achieving excellence in teaching, research and service. For more information regarding PVAMU, visit www.pvamu.edu.

###