

Leonard L. Haynes, III



Leonard L. Haynes, III is passionate about education and its transformative power. He has dedicated five decades of his career as a leader, advocate and nationally recognized expert on historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU). A graduate of Southern University in 1968, Leonard traded Baton Rouge, Louisiana, for Pittsburgh to continue his studies at Carnegie Mellon's Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Upon completing his master's degree in history in 1969, he went on to earn his doctorate in higher education administration from The Ohio State University.

During his academic career, Leonard has served as professor, acting president of Grambling State University and executive vice president of the Southern University System. His government service spanned many important roles. He was the first African American appointed by a U.S. president to be assistant secretary of postsecondary education in 1989; he was confirmed unanimously by the Senate. He was senior director with the U.S. Department of Education and former executive director of the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity through Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Leonard oversaw the Fulbright U.S. Student Program, served as director of academic programs for the United States Information Agency, and served as the director of the Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education.

In 2018, he received the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities Distinguished Service Award, which is now known as the Leonard L. Haynes III Distinguished Service Award. In 2020, he was appointed by the president to sit on the initiative's President's Board of Advisors and served on the Strada HBCU Advisory Council. He also is a renowned author.

Leonard is the recipient of 14 honorary degrees and the Servant Leader Award from the United Methodist Church and continues his commitment to service through work with organizations such as New Orleans's Whitney Plantation Museum, Southern University Alumni Association, United Methodist Church, Greater Washington Urban League, Big Brothers Big Sisters and Rotary International.

Dr. Haynes was appointed to the Virginia State University Board of Visitors in July of 2022.