



From the Office of the President

A Message from Dr. Stein

Dear Mary Baldwin Alumni,

I am saddened to share the news that Dr. Cynthia Haldenby Tyson, MBU's eighth president, passed away yesterday in Charlotte, N.C. Our condolences go out to Dr. Tyson's two children, Alexandra and Marcus, and all of her family, friends, and former colleagues and students.

Dr. Tyson led Mary Baldwin from 1985 to 2003, and forged a legacy of expansion for signature academic programs and the campus footprint. Throughout her 18 years, she created partnerships, constructed and renovated campus buildings, enlarged and diversified the student body, set fundraising records, and drew national publicity.

In 1993, she made the decision at the request of the Commonwealth of Virginia to establish the Virginia Women's Institute for Leadership, the nation's only women's cadet corps, which welcomed its first class of students in August 1995. Over the years, VWIL has graduated more than 500 cadets and earned a national reputation as a leadership development program for students pursuing both military and civilian careers.

Dr. Tyson supported the creation of the Office of African American Affairs in 1996, the first dedicated office at Mary Baldwin for promoting diversity and inclusion resources, programming, and opportunities. She enabled the founding of the Shakespeare and Performance program in 2001, which continues to offer a unique course of graduate study in partnership with Staunton's American Shakespeare Center. To recognize her contributions, the first-floor rehearsal room at ASC's Blackfriars Playhouse is named for Dr. Tyson.

The Program for the Exceptionally Gifted also flourished under Dr. Tyson's leadership – she came to Mary Baldwin the same year that PEG welcomed its first class, and ensured its ongoing development. Toward the end of her tenure, she led the way for the construction of a residence hall and home

base for PEG students, which in 2021 was renamed Cynthia Haldenby Tyson Hall in her honor.

Dr. Tyson expanded the then-named Adult Degree Program to satellite locations throughout Virginia, to increase access to a college education for non-traditional students who were often juggling coursework, careers, and family responsibilities.

Campus buildings and grounds grew and transformed during Dr. Tyson's tenure: she led the renovation to Carpenter Academic Hall in the 1990s, which was rededicated in honor of alumna Leona Bowman Carpenter '35 and a significant grant from the Carpenter Foundation. She spearheaded the purchase of the Staunton YMCA, which became the Physical Activities Center. The William G. Pannill Student Center was constructed in 1992 as a dedicated space for students to gather. The patio joining Pannill with Kable House and the Student Activities Center is named in Dr. Tyson's honor, given by former Board Chair Charles S. Luck III and his family.

Upon the announcement of Dr. Tyson's retirement in 2002, then-Board Chair Claire Lewis "Yum" Arnold '69 stated "she has inspired us all," and praised her emphasis on "excellence in academics, steady business principles, and an entrepreneurial spirit."

Born and raised in England, Dr. Tyson received her bachelor's, master's, and PhD from the University of Leeds. She first came to the United States as a Fulbright scholar, and eventually became a U.S. citizen. Before coming to Mary Baldwin, she served as a faculty member and as vice president for academic affairs and chief academic officer at Queens College in Charlotte from 1969 to 1985.

Dr. Tyson most recently served as president of the Robert Haywood Morrison Foundation, a non-profit, charitable organization based in Charlotte, that supports higher education, the arts and culture, and the natural environment. During her career, she gave her talents to many professional associations including as president of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and in leadership roles for the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities; the Virginia Foundation for Independent

Colleges; and the Council of Independent Colleges in Virginia.

In Staunton, she was named the first female president of the Rotary Club, and was active in the community through service on numerous boards including those of the Frontier Culture Museum; Shenandoah Shakespeare; and the Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge.

At Mary Baldwin, Dr. Tyson left an indelible mark on the institution that she served so well, and she will long be remembered as an extraordinary, energetic, and much-beloved leader in the hearts and minds of our entire community.

We will share information soon regarding Dr. Tyson's funeral and other opportunities to honor Dr. Tyson's memory.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Stein", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Jeff Stein
President

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