



# LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

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Board of Curators

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## STATEMENT OF THE LINCOLN UNIVERSITY BOARD OF CURATORS

In fall 2022, the Board of Curators for Lincoln University of Missouri voted to change the name of Founders Hall to Dr. James Frank Hall in honor of the only Lincoln alumnus to serve as president of Lincoln University. Dr. Frank was an exceptional leader at Lincoln. His devotion of time and talent to the University throughout his life sets an example for all to follow.

James Frank arrived on the campus of Lincoln University in 1949, attending school on a basketball scholarship. He graduated with honors in 1953, earning a bachelor's degree in physical education. As a Blue Tiger, he was captain of the basketball team, director of intramurals, president of the Sphinx Club and active in ROTC and Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. Declining an offer to play for the Brooklyn Dodgers' minor league team, he served two years as an officer in the Army Corps of Engineers, stationed in Korea. Returning stateside, Lt. Frank earned a master's degree in education from Springfield College in Massachusetts. He returned to Lincoln in 1956 as a professor and to coach basketball, rising to head coach in 1959 and leading the Blue Tigers to four National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II regional championship tournaments. He earned his doctorate in education in 1962 from Springfield College and went on to teach and coach in the City University of New York system. He also served as the first dean and vice president of academic affairs at Medgar Evers College in New York, formulating many of the college's educational management policies in its first years of existence.

Dr. Frank returned to his alma mater in 1973 to serve as president of Lincoln University, the first and only alumnus to hold this position. During his nearly 10-year tenure, he worked tirelessly to raise Lincoln's profile and secure stable funding for the University. Under his leadership, the University realized several significant accomplishments, including major renovations to Young Hall, Mitchell Hall, Jason Hall, Schweich Hall, and the President's Residence; construction of the Small Animal Research Facility, Thompkins Health Center, the shipping and receiving building, and a new utility distribution system. This was also a time of reorganization of the entire academic program into three separate colleges — which resulted in approximately \$500,000 savings for the University. Lincoln achieved a period of sound financial planning and complete financial stability, plus 4.2% enrollment growth from 1973-1984.

In his tenth and final year as Lincoln president, a disagreement developed between President Frank and some new members of the LU Board of Curators over their respective roles and policy choices for the University. The resulting impasse concluded with Dr. Frank being placed on paid leave for the remainder of his contract, which also included remaining in the President's Residence. The Board of Curators chose an interim president to assume leadership of the University. The current Board of Curators believes this compromise in no way diminishes the significant contributions made by Dr. Frank during his nearly 10-year tenure as president.

While still serving as president of Lincoln, Dr. Frank was appointed president of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the first African American and first college president in that post – a significant accomplishment for the prestige of both HBCUs and NCAA Division II schools. That honor was followed by his appointment as commissioner of the Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC), again boosting national recognition of HBCUs and encouraging inclusiveness in SWAC policies.

Despite the time and energy required for his responsibilities on the national stage, Dr. Frank continued to serve the University through the Lincoln University Foundation, becoming a leader in fundraising. He led the charge to pay off a \$750,000 shortfall to complete the \$2 million Soldiers' Memorial dedicated to the founders of Lincoln, emancipated Black soldiers from the 62nd and 65th regiments of the United States Colored Infantries. The two-year campaign included a \$50,000 donation from Dr. Frank's class of 1953. When Lincoln tore down Memorial Hall and built a new one, Dr. Frank drove the fundraising for that project as well. Dr. Frank's generosity and various scholarships will have a lasting impact on Lincoln's current and future students.

- Gerald R. Ford Endowed gift,
- Dr. James Frank NCAA endowed gift
- 3 Academic Scholarships
- Basketball Scholarship Fund

Over the course of his distinguished life, Dr. Frank contributed over \$300,000 to Lincoln in personal gifts.

Dr. Frank, who passed away in 2019, received many awards and accolades for his commitment to education and collegiate sports. He was inducted into 10 halls of fame, including Lincoln's ROTC, Alumni and Athletic Halls of Fame. The Board of Curators takes great pleasure in honoring Dr. Frank with the renaming of Founders Hall as tribute to his impact on Lincoln University. In no way does this name change diminish the University's reverence for our soldier founders, as exemplified by the Soldiers' Memorial Plaza on the Lincoln campus. A plaque will be placed in Dr. James Frank Hall to detail the history of the building's name, including its start as Founders Hall.

We are honored to pay tribute in this way to a notable alumnus and former leader while continuing to honor the memory of our University's founders. The naming ceremony will take place during Springfest in April.

*Lincoln University Board of Curators*

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