

PRIME TIME AT UL LAFAYETTE

What are Dr. Ray Authement's most significant achievements as the fifth president of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette?

Here's a quick look at some of them.

You can read about two others – the creation of University Research Park and campus development – beginning on pages 2 and 10, respectively, of this issue.

NAME CHANGE

In the early 1980s, Authement introduced a proposal to change the name of the University of Southwestern Louisiana to the University of Louisiana. There were plenty of reasons to seek a name that better reflected the school's stature.

- Research showed that a “double-directional” name, such as “Southwestern Louisiana,” was three times more likely to identify two-year community colleges than four-year universities.

- A new name would improve the university's ability to recruit the brightest faculty and students.

- It would increase the perceived value of the university's academic degrees.

- The new name would enable the university to better compete for the nation's top scientists and most prestigious research grants.

- More NCAA Division I teams would



On Sept. 10, 1999, USL was declared the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

want to compete with Ragin' Cajuns® on the court, field or track.

- It would increase donors' pride in their affiliation with the university.

For a brief time in 1984, USL was able to adopt a new name – the University of Louisiana. But a subsequent court challenge nullified the move.

It was a setback for Authement and other name change supporters but they refused to give up. Instead, their efforts became a crusade.

In 1995, the Louisiana Legislature

changed the name of the Board of Trustees for Colleges and Universities to the University of Louisiana System. It also allowed two institutions to change their names at the same time to the University of Louisiana at their geographical locations.

Four more years passed before a second school in the UL System – Northeast Louisiana University in Monroe – was willing to change its name too. “University of Louisiana at Lafayette,” was declared on Sept. 10, 1999, at a celebration held to kick off UL Lafayette's 100th birthday.

SELECTIVE ADMISSIONS

Until 1999, anyone who earned a high school diploma was eligible to attend the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

But an open admissions policy could be detrimental to students unprepared to perform college-level work. More than likely, they hadn't received scholarships, so they took out loans for tuition, books and living expenses. So, if college didn't work out, they had a debt to pay.

Open admissions was costly for USL, too. Remedial courses were expensive. And, the state provides more funding for upper-level students than freshmen. Taxpayers were paying for a student's education twice – first in high school and then in remedial classes.

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President's tenure 'has been transforming'

BY DR. GARY MAROTTA

Dr. Gary Marotta served as UL Lafayette's vice president for Academic Affairs from 1989-1999. A self-described “recovering administrator,” he is now professor of history at Buffalo State College, the largest four-year college in the State University of New York system. Marotta is former University Dean at Long Island University and former provost of Buffalo State College.



Dr. Gary Marotta

The University of Louisiana has been fortunate to have had a number of remarkable presidents in its long history; their stewardship, at key moments, has been decisive. But President Ray Authement's tenure – of unprecedented duration and intensity – has been more than decisive; it has been transforming.

Today, the University commands regional and national, indeed global, recognition. It is a recognition grounded in the academic and research core of the University, identified by distinguished programs in each of its colleges. A strong and productive faculty, an aspiring student body, committed alumni, all supported by state of the art infrastructure, backed by endowments, have been assembled. And that is what matters and that is what endures – a place that cherishes the human mind.

The impact of Dr. Authement is, I believe, comparable to the impact that President Charles William Eliot had on Harvard in the late 19th century and Nicholas Murray Butler had on Columbia in the first half of the 20th century. The transformation of the University during Dr. Authement's

presidency, from a provincial to a nationally competitive institution, has been achieved in the face of financial and political densities of resistance. By consolidating authority on campus, partnering with city and parish, astutely avoiding dangers, mastering details, and pursuing a large vision, Dr. Authement has overcome the obstacles and created a modern, dynamic university.

There is an e-mail I send to my graduate students; it says, “The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.” The message helps them to sustain the focus on the essence of the research projects or theses they are developing. Once they grasp its import, they get the job done. I do not recall the source of the aphorism, but it is the big lesson I have learned from

Dr. Authement. The “main thing” is not some strategic plan vetted by the university stakeholders. It is in Dr. Authement's head. But we can discern its shape in the details of decades of decisions and projects. Look around to see their fruits: nothing less than the University of Louisiana.

I have worked with several university presidents and chancellors, in both the public and independent sectors. All have been smart, all have been dedicated, but none as tireless or as determined as Dr. Authement. He is not, like too many higher education CEO's, a careerist, opportunist, or mere image-maker. The University of Louisiana is not smoke and mirrors. It has been built the old fashioned way: through long-term engagement, attention to detail and hard work.

Dr. Authement knows how to order priorities, make adjustments, get results – and survive. No mean feat in Louisiana, or any place else in higher education for that matter. He is not an easy man to work for because he believes in equality: He believes that everybody should work as hard and as smart as he does. If we did, he implies, we would be contributing to the building of a great institution, and that would invest our lives with meaning. And so it does.

It was extraordinary to be on his team. What kind of team was it? It was a track team, and I had a 10-year run. Others fell out earlier, some continued the pace. But the best run of all was that unprecedented, intense long-distance run – the one that transformed the University. ■

1984	1986	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ USL becomes University of Louisiana briefly ■ Center for Advanced Computer Studies created ■ University acquires Gulf South Research Institute in New Iberia, La. (now NIRC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cajundome opens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ University awards its first doctorate in computer engineering ■ Budget woes prompt 10-hour, four-day work week during summer session ■ Apparel Computer Integrated Manufacturing Center (A-CIM) created 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ CACS connects to Internet ■ Marine Survival Training Center opens ■ La Louisiane magazine debuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Creation of Walk of Honor announced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ USL Alumni Association purchases Heymann family residence on St. Mary Boulevard for use as an alumni center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Authement undergoes open heart surgery ■ USL achieves SREB Doctoral II status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Office of Minority Affairs created ■ Enterprise Center of Louisiana, a business incubator, opens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ USL becomes third university in world to offer doctorate in Francophone studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Louisiana Legislature creates the University of Louisiana System; paves way for USL name change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ University receives \$10 million federal EETAP grant, biggest research grant in school history ■ Ragin' Cajuns® becomes federally registered trademark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enrollment reaches all-time high of more than 17,000 ■ Investing in Our Future campaign begins ■ Investing in Our Future fund drive chairmen establish endowed chair in Authement's name 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Estuarine Habitats and Coastal Fisheries Center opens

‘Real Leadership Is Very Unselfish...’

How did Dr. Ray Authement remain an effective, innovative university president for more than 30 years?

That’s a question Dr. Sally Clausen, president of the University of Louisiana System, is particularly qualified to answer. She served as state commissioner of higher education and was president of Southeastern Louisiana University from 1995 to 2001. Earlier this year, she was inducted into the Louisiana Political Hall of Fame.

Clausen noted that university presidents must satisfy many “bosses,” including state education boards, state and federal lawmakers, parents, students, faculty, sports fans and community leaders. So, university presidents are “decision makers by consensus and if you cannot draw consensus around major issues, you cannot succeed. Anyone who can attain consensus over such a long period of time is truly an amazing leader.

“You do so by the sheer power of your drive, your intellect, your personality and your willingness to understand the big picture,” she said.

Effective university presidents know their ideas and actions will sometimes be controversial and “sometimes very difficult. Yet, they have the courage of conviction

of a moral leader to do what is right by the people they represent.”

Authement has those qualities – and more, she continued.

“He’s dedicated. He has vision. He works hard. He collaborates with people and sometimes he has to make some isolated decisions, knowing that he’s going to take some heat.

“But his vision has always been impressive because he seems to anticipate where the university ought to be in the next few



Dr. Sally Clausen

COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA SYSTEM

years and makes conscious decisions now to ensure that it gets there. Otherwise, we wouldn’t have University Research Park, the LITE Center, the Paul and Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum or Moody Hall. We wouldn’t necessarily have well over \$100 million in endowments.

“So many things that he has envisioned and worked to accomplish are the sheer genius of his thoughtful anticipation, while always, however, staying in tune with the politics of the area, the state politics, the students and their needs, and the faculty’s need for resources.”

Clausen noted that Authement doesn’t seek the limelight. “His quiet, daily work, every day, day in and day out, on little issues and big issues, keeps the

enterprise moving forward.

“Real leadership is very unselfish and he is one of the most unselfish leaders that I’ve ever worked with. He sets high expectations. He shares. He stays engaged. He encourages. He’s not afraid of assessment. He’s always in direct contact with students. In fact, he keeps his focus on the students. He believes that diversity is something that should define us but not divide us; he embraces it. And, he changes with the times.”

Authement earned credibility over the years by building a record of success, Clausen said.

Members of the University of Louisiana System

- Grambling State University, Grambling, La.
- Louisiana Tech University, Ruston, La.
- McNeese State University, Lake Charles, La.
- Nicholls State University, Thibodaux, La.
- Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, La.
- Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, La.
- University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Lafayette, La.
- University of Louisiana at Monroe, Monroe, La.

“And he doesn’t break his word. Trust is not built overnight and the power of his word, his trustworthiness and his follow-through instilled confidence in those who were affected by his decisions. I think that’s the mark of a real leader and history will, I believe, reflect on him as one of the great leaders of our time.” ■



Dr. Ray Authement looks down on Cajun Field from a stadium skybox.

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But until 1998, Louisiana did not have a statewide community college system, so there were few postsecondary options. Once one was established, UL Lafayette implemented selective admissions, gradually raising the academic requirements.

The results are gratifying: The average ACT scores and high school GPAs of incoming freshmen have been rising steadily. And, UL Lafayette has attracted a record number of high school valedictorians.

So, UL Lafayette’s graduation rate will rise, too, in coming years.

DOCTORAL II

For the average person, USL becoming a Southern Regional Economic Board Doctoral II university in 1992 was hardly a reason to pop open a bottle of champagne. But for the university, it was cause for celebration.

One reason: The Louisiana Board of Regents allocates more state funding to Doctoral II universities. So, UL Lafayette received an extra \$2.023 million.

That “big step” took five years to achieve. It started when Authement committed to an expansion of the doctoral fellowship program at USL. The fellowship program steadily increased the number of doctoral candidates at the university.

NCAA DIVISION 1

After the National Collegiate Athletic Association decided in 1973 to create competitive divisions, only three Louisiana universities chose to join the top tier – Division I.

They were: Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, La.; the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (then known as the University of Southwestern Louisiana); and Tulane University in New Orleans.

In general, larger schools compete in Division I.

NCAA Division I members voted in 1978 to create three subdivisions, I-A, I-AA and I-AAA. Again, the larger universities sought the top tier, I-A. So did Authement.

Ultimately, all major Louisiana universities joined Division I. But not all made the climb to Division I-A. This year, there are four state, public universities in Division I-A: LSU, UL Lafayette, UL Monroe and Louisiana Tech.

In addition to conveying prestige, the Division I-A designation affects guarantees and scholarships. “Guarantees” refers to the amount a team will pay an opponent to entice it to play. Guarantees are much bigger in Division I-A. Also, Division I-A programs can offer more scholarships.

NCAA Division I-A affects the status of other university sports by increasing a school’s visibility and boosting its image.

Dan McDonald, a sports writer for *The Advertiser*, Lafayette

Leading the Way

DURING DR. RAY P. AUTHEMENT’S PRESIDENCY, UL LAFAYETTE HAS BUILT AN IMPRESSIVE RECORD OF ‘FIRSTS.’ SOME EXAMPLES:

FIRST UNIVERSITY IN LOUISIANA TO:

- acquire MULTICS computer system (second in the nation after MIT)
- install a fiber optic backbone on campus
- earn a Doctoral II research designation
- develop a center dedicated just to job creation
- use computerized patient simulators to train student nurses
- obtain an atom smasher
- have its students design and launch a working satellite
- establish an Americorps service learning program
- create a finance, insurance and risk management program
- compete in the prestigious DARPA Grand Challenge for robotic vehicles (CajunBot)
- establish a marine survival training center
- offer a bachelor’s degree with specialization in computer graphics and animation
- establish an intensive care laboratory for nursing students

FIRST UNIVERSITY IN SOUTH/SOUTHEAST TO:

- create a master’s degree in computer engineering
- establish a Ph.D. in cognitive science
- offer a bachelor’s degree in industrial design
- acquire equipment that could manufacture compact discs

FIRST UNIVERSITY IN NATION TO:

- establish a birthing lab, with computerized patient simulators, for nursing students
- offer bachelor’s degree in telecommunications
- appoint a black vice president at (a predominantly white university)
- establish a digital immersive visualization center to be shared by government, private industry and academia
- be designated as an apparel computer integrated manufacturing center
- establish a center to promote bilingualism

NORTH AMERICA:

- to offer a Ph.D. in Francophone studies

1999	2000	2001	2003	2004	2005	2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ USL becomes University of Louisiana at Lafayette ■ Centennial Celebration begins ■ Selective admissions implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New UL Lafayette Foundation building opens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cayenne debuts as new spirit leader ■ Center for Cultural and Eco-Tourism established ■ President Authement plants Second Century Oaks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ LACES created 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ CajunBot, an autonomous robotic vehicle, is one of only 15 vehicles who earns the chance to compete in desert race for \$1 million prize from U.S. Department of Defense ■ Kathleen Babineaux Blanco becomes first USL graduate to serve as governor of Louisiana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ UL Lafayette houses and assists Hurricanes Katrina and Rita evacuees ■ College of Nursing and Allied Health Professions becomes only the seventh college in nation to earn prestigious Center of Excellence designation ■ Exclusive Ragin’ Red spice introduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ UL Lafayette is first in Louisiana to have a satellite in orbit that was designed by students