

MEDIA KIT

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MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Johnson University Historic Public Announcement

Knoxville, Tennessee – June 20, 2017

What: Major public announcement to unveil significant and historic changes to the leadership of Johnson University.

Where: Johnson University
Alumni Memorial Chapel
7900 Johnson Drive
Knoxville, TN 37998
*On Johnson Drive, pass the security booth, then turn right at the T. The Chapel is located at the top of the hill. Parking is available on the street and in the parking lot between the Glass Memorial Library and the Eubanks Activities Center.

When: **Tuesday, June 20, 2017, at 10:00 a.m.**

Who: L.D. Campbell, D.D., Chairman, Johnson University Board of Trustees
Gary Weedman, Ph.D., President, Johnson University
L. Thomas Smith Jr., Ph.D., Provost, Johnson University
Richard Clark, Vice President for External Relations
Community leaders and partners, faculty and staff members from Johnson University, and local friends of the University.

ABOUT JOHNSON UNIVERSITY

Johnson University has been a leader in Christian higher education since 1893. The University is listed on *Forbes* magazine's "100 Most Financially Fit Colleges," and among the nation's "Top Christian Colleges" by *Niche*. The University offers more than 70 associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs across three campuses – Tennessee (Knoxville), Florida (Kissimmee), and Online – as well as localized ExtendEd sites across the country.

For more information, please visit JohnsonU.edu

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MEDIA RELEASE

Johnson University Makes Historic Announcement of the Seventh President of the University.

For Immediate Release

Knoxville, TN – June 20, 2017

The Board of Trustees of Johnson University officially announced the unanimous selection of Dr. L. Thomas Smith, Jr. as president-elect. When he succeeds Dr. Gary Weedman on July 1, 2018, he will become the seventh president of the University in its 125 year history.

Dr. Weedman and his wife Janis have served the University as president and first lady for the past ten years. By the time of his retirement on June 30, 2018, he will have served Johnson University 18 years in multiple roles and higher education for 50 years.

Dr. Smith has served as vice president for academic affairs/provost at Johnson University, Knoxville, Tennessee, since October, 2014, having previously served the University as professor and a dean. He is a native of Carter County, Tennessee, and a graduate of Johnson University (B.A., 1978), Emmanuel Christian Seminary (M.A.R., 1986), and the University of Tennessee (Ph.D., 1990). He is the author of *Above Every Other Desire: A Centennial History of Johnson Bible College* (1992), along with essays, articles, and book reviews to various publications.

Dr. Smith has held associate, youth, and worship ministries in Knoxville and Valley Forge, Tennessee. He has served in preaching ministries in Jonesborough, Kingston, Embreeville, Knoxville, and Farragut, Tennessee. And he has engaged in interim preaching ministries in Knoxville, Rockwood, Morristown, Farragut, Chattanooga, and Seymour, Tennessee.

During his tenure as provost, Johnson University received reaffirmation of accreditation from SACSCOC, including approval and successful implementation of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP); programmatic accreditation of the Bible and congregational ministry programs from ABHE; and CACREP accreditation for the graduate counseling program. He has overseen the addition of five new certificate programs, four new associate degrees, eleven bachelor's programs, and three graduate programs. Under his leadership Johnson has expanded its offerings to include academic programs in four ExtendEd sites (Indianapolis, Louisville, Orlando, and downtown Knoxville), developed the academic strategic plan for the Florida campus, and successfully completed the first year of the Future of Hope theology institute. Dr. Smith and his wife, Deborah, have two married sons, Jacob and Joshua, and six grandchildren.

Dr. Smith will assume the role of president-elect/provost of Johnson University effective immediately and will become president on July 1, 2018.

Johnson University has been a leader in Christian higher education since 1893. The University is listed on *Forbes* magazine's "100 Most Financially Fit Colleges," and among the nation's "Top

Christian Colleges” by *Niche*. The University offers more than 70 associate, bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral programs across three campuses – Tennessee (Knoxville), Florida (Kissimmee), and Online – as well as localized ExtendEd sites across the country.

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FACT SHEET

JOHNSON UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Johnson University has helped students explore their passions and pursue their calling since its founding in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1893. The University's three-fold educational approach blends Arts & Sciences and Bible & Theology with professional study areas, preparing students for meaningful impact on the world in the name of Christ.

The Johnson University System offers more than 70 associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs across three campuses, as well as localized ExtendEd sites across the country.

Forbes has recognized Johnson University as one of the "100 most financially fit private colleges in the United States." *US News and World Report* recently ranked Johnson among their Top 15 "least expensive" accredited schools in the country. Learn more at www.JohnsonU.edu.

JOHNSON UNIVERSITY TENNESSEE

Nestled in the foothills of the beautiful Smoky Mountains, Johnson University Tennessee offers more than 50 affordable associate, bachelor's, and master's programs for students who desire to serve Christ and others. Johnson University's three-fold multi-disciplinary approach equips students with an understanding of God's **WORD**, God's **WORLD**, and God's **WORK**, producing well-rounded graduates who are prepared to pursue their calling.

JOHNSON UNIVERSITY FLORIDA

Located in the heart of the Sunshine State, Johnson University Florida provides diverse educational experiences in a multi-cultural setting. Students choose from an array of practical, affordable associate and bachelor's degree programs in the fields of business, ministry, intercultural studies, counseling, and communications – all designed for individuals desiring to serve Christ and others.

JOHNSON UNIVERSITY ONLINE

Johnson University Online uses personal, innovative teaching methods to prepare students from across the globe to pursue their calling. As an accredited institution and long-time leader in distance learning, Johnson University offers affordable online associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs that prepare students for meaningful impact on the world in the name of Christ.

JOHNSON UNIVERSITY EXTENDED

Located in Phoenix, Indianapolis, Louisville, Knoxville, and Orlando, ExtendEd sites offer affordable business and ministry degrees with flexible delivery methods that combine online and on-site classes with hands-on experiences in churches and other organizations.

BIOS

Gary Weedman, Ph.D., President, Johnson University

Gary Weedman is the sixth president of Johnson University, beginning his tenure on July 1, 2007. He formerly served as senior vice president of TCM International Institute in Heiligenkreuz, Austria; provost at Palm Beach Atlantic University in West Palm Beach, Florida; and vice president for academic affairs and dean at Milligan College.

Weedman graduated from Johnson University with an A.B. degree in 1964. He received his M.A. degree from Western Illinois University in Macomb, Illinois, in 1967, and his doctoral degree from Indiana University in 1971. He has also studied at Lincoln Christian Seminary in Lincoln, Illinois, and the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

Weedman has served as a guest lecturer in seminaries and colleges in Romania, Moldova, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Japan, Uzbekistan, and Great Britain. He has written a number of articles and books and made a presentation at the International Society of Biblical Literature in Groningen, the Netherlands.

L.D. Campbell, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Johnson University

L. D. Campbell was the pastor/teacher of First Church of Christ, Burlington, Kentucky, for over 38 years. During that time, the attendance grew from 250 to over 2500 and from two full-time employees to 40. Mr. Campbell is a 1965 graduate of Johnson University, received a master's degree from Cincinnati Christian University in 1989, and did graduate studies at Emmanuel Christian Seminary. In 2011 he received an honorary Doctor of Divinity from Johnson University. He has been a member of the Board of Trustees since 1984 and currently serves as chairman.

L. D. is married to the former Joyce McPhetridge (Johnson University class of 1963). They have two daughter and four grandchildren

L. Thomas Smith Jr., Ph.D., President Elect, Johnson University

Dr. Smith has served as vice president for academic affairs/provost at Johnson University, Knoxville, Tennessee, since October, 2014, having previously served the University as professor and a dean. He is a native of Carter County, Tennessee, and a graduate of Johnson University (B.A., 1978), Emmanuel Christian Seminary (M.A.R., 1986), and the University of Tennessee (PhD, 1990). He is the author of *Above Every Other Desire: A Centennial History of Johnson Bible College* (1992), along with essays, articles, and book reviews to various publications. Dr. Smith has engaged in interim preaching ministries in Knoxville, Rockwood, Morristown, Farragut, Chattanooga, and Seymour, Tennessee.

During his tenure as provost, Johnson University received reaffirmation of accreditation from SACSCOC, including approval and successful implementation of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), programmatic accreditation of the Bible and congregational ministry programs from ABHE, and CACREP accreditation for the graduate counseling program. He has overseen the addition of five new certificate programs, four new associate degrees, eleven bachelor's programs, and three graduate programs. Under his leadership, Johnson has expanded its offerings to include academic programs in four ExtendEd sites (Indianapolis, Louisville, Orlando, and downtown Knoxville), developed the academic strategic plan for the Florida campus and successfully completed the first year of the Future of Hope theology institute.

Dr. Smith and his wife, Deborah, have two married sons, Jacob and Joshua, and six grandchildren.

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

I am delighted to add my endorsement to the decision of the Board of Trustees to name L. Thomas Smith as "president-elect" of Johnson University. Dr. Smith brings a resume that fits him well for this new role.

- He was reared in a Christian church in upper east Tennessee.
- He attended Johnson, as well as two other institutions connected to the Christian churches/churches of Christ in Tennessee.
- He has a Ph.D. degree in history from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
- He has served in congregational ministry in various roles.
- He has taught at Johnson for 28 years.
- He is a historian (1) of American religious history; (2) of the history of our religious tradition; and (3) of the history of Johnson University, having published numerous works about each of those three areas.
- He wrote the centennial history of Johnson University: *Above Every Other Desire: A Centennial History of Johnson Bible College 1893--1993* and is updating that work for our quasiquintennial (125th year) 2018-2019.
- He knows about higher education administration with experience as chair of the General Education Committee, dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, and currently as provost/vice president for Academic Affairs.
- He was a Pressnell Fellow in the Executive Leadership Institute of the Tennessee Independent College and University Association (2016-2017), having received a Certificate of Completion this spring.
- He has proven himself a skilled leader in his administrative roles at Johnson University.
- Perhaps most importantly, he enthusiastically embraces our institutional mission "to educate students for Christian ministry and other strategic vocations framed by the Great Commission in order to extend the kingdom of God among all nations."

I am happy to welcome him as the president-elect of Johnson University.

Gary Weedman, Ph.D.
President of Johnson University

ENDORSEMENT

I am pleased to take this opportunity to endorse Dr. Tommy Smith as President-Elect of Johnson University. Dr. Smith's name immediately came to mind when I learned of President Weedman's intention to conclude his term of service in 2018, and I am thankful that Dr. Smith accepted the Board's call.

From my perspective there is a divine logic to Tommy's appointment. Both as a professor of history and as the University's provost he has distinguished himself as a mentor to student and teacher alike and as an expert in Christian higher education. As a historian, he literally wrote the book on the history of Johnson University (*Above Every Other Desire*, 1993). He is known as a compelling preacher of the Gospel and a man of profound faith. Deeply appreciative of the University's past, mission, and potential, he also is alert to its challenges and opportunities within the current climate of American higher education. Tommy has made it a particular goal to understand the unique context of operations at the University's Florida campus, and his counsel and influence here have been invaluable.

As well-equipped as he is with energy, a strategic mind, broad experience, and an abiding faith, Dr. Smith needs the undiminished goodwill and support of friends, colleagues, donors, prayer partners, and Christian leaders in order to be successful in his new role. We seek God's special blessing during this transition.

In Christ,

Michael L. Chambers, Ph.D.

Chancellor & Vice Provost, Johnson University Florida

QUOTES

“There are many who love Johnson University as much as I do, but no one loves Johnson any more than me. I am humbled and honored to accept. I have invested the past 28 years of my life in this institution, serving as professor, dean, and provost, as well as university historian. I know much about the past of this school, have had a hand in shaping the present, and am so grateful that the trustees have given me opportunity to lead Johnson into the future.”

– **L.Thomas Smith, Jr.**

President-Elect, Johnson University

“Dr. Smith has proven his value to Johnson University for many years in a variety of positions including most recently provost. During his tenure as provost Dr. Smith has excelled in helping usher in an era of tremendous programs and faculty growth. Dr. Smith has demonstrated his commitment to the core values, mission, and vision of the University.”

– **L.D.Campbell**

Chairman, Board of Trustees, Johnson University

“I had opportunity to witness Tommy as he mastered the challenging role of provost. He did so in amazingly record time, while exhibiting ethical excellence and quality decision making. His integrity, service of Johnson and most of all his love of Christ and his kingdom foretell another great presidency of Johnson University.”

– **Martha Alligood**

Member, Board of Trustees, Johnson University

“Dr. Tommy Smith is a ‘Johnson Man’ who understands our heritage. As our seventh president, he’s the leader we need on the eve of our 125th anniversary.”

– **Greg Grant**

Member, Board of Trustees, Johnson University

“Dr. Smith’s thorough knowledge of and deep appreciation for Johnson’s rich history no doubt fuels his obvious desire to build upon the foundation of his faithful predecessors. His passion for Johnson’s mission and vision is evident to all who know and have worked with him. I am confident that Dr. Smith’s leadership will continue to increase and expand the University’s impact for Christ well into the future.”

– **Drew Mentzer**

Member, Board of Trustees, Johnson University

CONTACT INFORMATION

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