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VP Theotis Robinson's Retirement

After 25 years of service to the University of Tennessee, the last 14 as a vice president and member of the UT System Administration executive team, Theotis Robinson will retire from the University on Feb. 1. I have enjoyed working with Theotis in my present capacity and since I joined UT in 2006.

Theotis' life has featured one major milestone after the next, from civil rights to city government to serving the community. In 1961, Theotis and two other students became the first African American undergraduates admitted to UT. He was vice president of economic development for the 1982 Knoxville World's Fair, and he served on Knoxville City Council from 1970 to 1977. Theotis was the first African American elected to that office in more than a half century. In 1994, he was a charter inductee into the UT African American Hall of Fame. Theotis is a member of the UT Commission for Blacks and a former political opinion columnist. Knoxville's Metro Pulse newspaper named him one of the 100 most influential Knoxvilleans of the 20th century.

Theotis began his career at UT in 1989 as a lecturer in political science and later joined the staff of the purchasing department. In 1992, Theotis became an administrative aide in the Office of Federal Affairs until 1999, when he transitioned into the same post within the Office of the Senior Vice President. He was named a vice president in 2000.

To his work, Theotis has brought valued insight into the University's numerous constituencies and a unique perspective on history and social change that have shaped UT. I appreciate his contributions in these and many other areas for the benefit of the University and those who lead it.

In anticipation of Theotis' departure, UT System Administration Equity and Diversity has been undergoing restructuring to facilitate that area's oversight by Human Resources. This change reflects a shift in accountability and responsibility for diversity programs and services toward our campuses and institutes. It also is the result of discussions with key leaders at each campus and institute about the role of UT System Administration in equity and diversity and the result of research on previous and peer system models.

I'm confident this approach will allow us to enhance our focus on diversity from numerous perspectives, in both students and employees, and to provide greater accountability in assessment and reporting.

I am grateful to Theotis for all his years of service to the University, and I wish him and his wife, Jonida, the very best as they enjoy a new chapter of life together.

All the best,
Joe

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