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President Beck A. Taylor Begins Tenure as Samford University's 19th President *July 1 marks the first day in office for President Taylor.*

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama (July 1, 2021) - [President Beck A. Taylor](#) officially began his tenure as the 19th president of [Samford University](#) on Thursday, July 1, which marked his first day in office. Accompanied by his wife, First Lady and Executive Director of Legacy League Julie A. Taylor, he began the day with a morning prayer service in Hodges Chapel where he provided the benediction.

"Words cannot express the excitement that Julie, Chloe and I share as we rejoin this amazing community of learning and faith," President Taylor said. "My family and I thank you for the hundreds of emails, cards, and phone calls welcoming us back to Birmingham, and for your sustaining prayers as we said our goodbyes to a community we love in Spokane and traveled 2,250 miles to our new home here."

Taylor, who most recently served as president of Whitworth University, a position he assumed in 2010, is no stranger to the Samford community. He served as dean and professor of economics for Samford's Brock School of Business from 2005-2010.

"I do not think there is another school like Samford in the country that combines great academics and a faithful community, and prepares students for lives of meaning and purpose in the world," Taylor said. "Only Samford could call me back and we are overjoyed to be here."

While addressing his top priorities as president, he said he plans to consider two words: continuity and change. For Taylor, continuity means sustaining the aspects that have persisted within the Samford community for 180 years.

"These include an emphasis on the Lordship of Jesus Christ, an insatiable appetite for academic and co-curricular excellence, a primary focus on the moral and professional development of our students, an investment in the professional and vocational well-being of our employees, and a fierce dedication to ensuring that all of Samford's citizens are treated with love, dignity, and respect."

As for change, he hopes to lead the university as it prepares students to engage with an ever-changing world.

"It is our job to continuously reinvent the university – sometimes in small ways and occasionally on a larger scale – to remain relevant and to serve our students and communities well. Samford has shown an ability to innovate and change to meet these evolving needs, and together, we will continue to look for ways to add value to our students' educational experiences."



Taylor’s top priorities that he would like to achieve during his first year in office include meeting as many students, faculty, staff and alumni as possible and learning about their Samford experiences, implementing immediate work on the initiatives in the report from the Task Force on Racial Justice, building positive and productive relationships with Samford’s trustees and major benefactors, listening to the aspirations of campus and beginning to develop a narrative that will inform an eventual update to the strategic plan, completing the Forever Samford campaign, and celebrating the university’s newfound community after two pandemic-disrupted academic years.

He also plans to visit alumni chapters around the country, churches and other supporting organizations, meet with other leaders in Birmingham and Alabama to assess how Samford can best contribute to the flourishing of its home communities, and finally, eat a lot of barbecue.

“The best days of Samford are still ahead, and I can’t wait to work with our faculty, our staff, our students, our alumni all over the world and our friends to chart an exciting vision for the institution going forward.”

For more information about President Taylor, visit [this website](#).



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Beck A. Taylor Elected 19th President of Samford University
Former dean returns after 11-year presidency at Whitworth University.

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama (March 10, 2021) – The Samford University Board of Trustees today elected Beck A. Taylor as its 19th president, effective July 1, 2021. Taylor succeeds Andrew Westmoreland, who is retiring after serving as president of Samford University since 2006.

The new president's election came at a special meeting of the Samford University Board of Trustees this morning. Taylor, 51, was recommended to the board by a 23-member presidential search committee following a six-month national search involving more than 80 nominations and applicants.

"We could not be more pleased with the appointment of Beck Taylor as the 19th president of Samford University," said William J. Stevens, chair of the Samford Board of Trustees. "He brings an exceptional record of academic leadership, demonstrated success in fundraising, and a personal commitment to Samford. We unanimously and confidently agree that President-elect Taylor possesses the experience, strategic vision, and alignment with our values to continue building Samford's reputation as a leading Christian university."

The current president of Whitworth University, Taylor is no stranger to the Samford community, having served as dean and professor of economics for Samford's Brock School of Business from 2005-2010.

"I am profoundly honored and excited to return to Samford University, and to follow my good friend, Andy Westmoreland," said President-elect Taylor. "Samford is a crown jewel in Christian higher education, and it is committed to pursuing excellence at the intersection of faith and learning. My wife, Julie, and I already love this place and its people, and we look forward to the journey ahead."

Taylor's tenure as the 18th president of Whitworth, a position which he has occupied since 2010, has been highlighted by a renewed emphasis on community involvement; efforts to enhance academic programs and quality; the building of new campus infrastructure to facilitate the university's academic, athletic, and student life programs; the creation of newly endowed faculty positions and centers; leading Whitworth's largest-ever comprehensive fundraising campaign; and an emphasis on overall institutional effectiveness.

As dean of Samford's Brock School of Business, Taylor led the rapid transformation of the business school, including its renaming to honor Harry B. Brock, Jr., founder of Compass Bank. Taylor led the Brock School of Business to establish eight new academic programs, as well as the school's new honors program.



The school's entrepreneurship program was recognized in 2010 as the nation's top emerging program by the U.S. Association for Small Business & Entrepreneurship. In an effort to build bridges between students and the Birmingham business community, Taylor established the Samford Business Network, as well as a 45-member advisory board of influential business leaders.

After earning his undergraduate degree from Baylor University with majors in economics and finance, Taylor was employed as an analyst for Andersen Consulting (now Accenture) in Houston, Texas. He went on to earn his M.S. and Ph.D. in economics from Purdue University. Shortly thereafter, he returned to Baylor as associate dean for research and faculty development for the Hankamer School of Business, and was named the first holder of the W.H. Smith Professorship in Economics. In 2002, he was appointed as a visiting scholar by Harvard University where he spent one year in residence at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Taylor is a member of numerous professional and academic organizations, and he has served as a strategic business consultant for dozens of organizations. He and his wife of 28 years, Julie, have three children: Zachary, 25, Lauren, 22, and Chloe, 14.

Inauguration ceremonies will take place in the fall. For more information about Samford's 19th president, visit Samford.edu/PresidentElect.

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ABOUT SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

Samford is a leading Christian university offering undergraduate programs grounded in the liberal arts with an array of nationally recognized graduate and professional schools. Founded in 1841, Samford is the 87th-oldest institution of higher learning in the United States. The Wall Street Journal ranks Samford 2nd nationally for student engagement and U.S. News & World Report ranks Samford 86th nationally for best value. Samford enrolls 5,729 students from 47 states and 30 countries in its 10 academic schools: arts, arts and sciences, business, divinity, education, health professions, law, nursing, pharmacy and public health. Samford fields 17 athletic teams that compete in the tradition-rich Southern Conference, and ranks 1st nationally for its Graduation Success Rate among all NCAA Division I schools.



Beck A. Taylor

President-elect, Samford University

Beck A. Taylor comes to Samford University after serving as the 18th president of Whitworth University in Spokane, Washington, since 2010. Prior to this appointment, Taylor served as dean and professor of economics for Samford's Brock School of Business (2005-2010), and associate dean for research and faculty development for Baylor University's Hankamer School of Business (1997-2005).

Taylor's tenure at Whitworth was highlighted by a renewed emphasis on community involvement; efforts to enhance academic programs and quality, the building of new campus infrastructure to facilitate the university's academic, athletic, and student life programs; the creation of newly endowed faculty positions and centers; leading Whitworth's largest-ever comprehensive fundraising campaign; and an emphasis on overall institutional effectiveness.

After earning his undergraduate degree from Baylor with majors in economics and finance, Taylor was employed as an analyst for Andersen Consulting (now Accenture) in Houston, Texas. He went on to earn his M.S. and Ph.D. in economics from Purdue University. After returning to the Baylor faculty, Taylor was named the first holder of the W.H. Smith Professorship in Economics. In 2002, he was appointed as a visiting scholar by Harvard University where he spent one year in residence at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

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As a scholar, Taylor has published dozens of studies in economics journals such as *Review of Economics and Statistics*, *Journal of Labor Economics*, *Journal of Human Resources* and *Journal of Money, Credit, and Banking*. Illustrating his diverse research interests and his connections to the social sciences, Taylor has also published groundbreaking research in public health and child developmental psychology. His research has been cited in testimony given before the U.S. Congress, the Federal Trade Commission, and the California State Assembly, and also has been referenced in publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*.

Taylor is a member of numerous professional and academic organizations, and he has served as a strategic business consultant for dozens of organizations. Taylor and his wife of 28 years, Julie, have three children: Zachary, 24, a Nashville-based music recording artist, Lauren, 22, a recent Whitworth graduate, and Chloe, 13.



Samford University Presidential Search Timeline

The Samford Presidential Search Committee received more than 80 nominations and applications in its search for the university's 19th president. The search lasted six months, ending with a Board of Trustees vote and formal announcement of March 10, 2021.

August 28, 2020

Board of Trustees Chair William J. Stevens Announced Search Committee

President Andrew Westmoreland, who has led the institution since 2006, shared news of his retirement, effective June 30, 2021. In a message to students, faculty and staff, William Stevens, chair of Samford's Board of Trustees announced the formation of the Samford Presidential Search Committee and its two co-chairs: Beth Stukes and Tim Vines.

September 17, 2020

Presidential Search Committee Hosted First Meeting

The Samford Presidential Search Committee met for the first time. William Stevens, chair of the Board of Trustees, charged the committee to "identify a Christian leader for the next chapter in Samford's history." The 23-member committee reviewed a code of ethics in which each individual agrees to the importance of maintaining the highest ethical standards, to respect the confidentiality of the search process and to protect the rights of individuals nominated.

October 3, 2020

Presidential Assessment Survey Results

The Samford Presidential Search committee reviewed results of the Presidential Assessment Survey at a meeting in Birmingham. The survey gathered input from nearly 2,000 faculty, staff, students and alumni. Responses were received from more than 1,900 individuals to produce the 279-page report affirming agreement across all constituencies of the most desirable leadership traits for Samford's nineteenth president.

November 7, 2020

Samford Presidential Search Committee Set Deadline for Application

The Samford Presidential Search Committee met in Birmingham to begin narrowing its list of potential candidates. The committee established a deadline of Dec. 1 to receive additional nominations and applications.



January 27, 2021

Samford Presidential Search Committee Provided Update

Following a Jan. 23 meeting, co-chairs Beth Thorne Stukes and Tim Vines issued an update. "This meeting of the presidential search committee was a time of concentrated and prayerful conversation as we continue to review the qualifications of a small pool of exceptional candidates. Today, all members of the search committee engaged in transparent and open dialog seeking to prayerfully discern the unique attributes that equip each candidate to be the next president of Samford University," they said.

March 9, 2021

Samford Presidential Search Committee Convenes Reference Panels

A series of constituent reference panels were convened to interview the final candidate for the Samford's 19th president. Four panels—faculty/staff, students, alumni/friends and area ministers—met with the finalist recommended by search committee for consideration. The candidate also met with the university's deans and president's cabinet.

March 10, 2021

Board of Trustees Voted on Final Candidate

Following the nation-wide search, Samford's Board of Trustees convened a special meeting to vote on the appointment of Beck A. Taylor as the 19th president of Samford University. Upon the vote of approval, a formal announcement was made.

Looking Forward

Taylor will take office on July 1, 2021, with his inauguration ceremonies to follow in the fall.



The Samford University Presidential Search Committee

Co-chairs

- Beth Thorne Stukes, Samford trustee, corporate and philanthropic leader
- Tim Vines, Samford trustee, chief executive officer, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama

Members

- John Bell, Samford trustee, consultant Oil Equipment Co., Inc.
- Karon O. Bowdre '77, '80, Samford trustee, Senior United States District Judge of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Alabama
- Hope Dawson, senior, journalism and mass communication major, president of Student Government Association
- Stephen Dillard '92, Samford overseer, president of Samford Alumni Association, presiding judge of the Court of Appeals of Georgia
- Sherri Foyt '09, Samford trustee, former elementary school teacher
- Lisa Gurley '01, '03, associate professor, Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing, immediate past chair of the Samford faculty senate
- Keith Herron '86, '89, Samford overseer, retired senior executive vice president, head of corporate responsibility and community engagement, Regions Bank
- Robert Holmes, Samford trustee, retired senior vice president, Alabama Power Company
- Jacob Hopkins, junior, marketing/finance major, Samford ambassador
- Jonathan Jenkins, second-year Juris Doctor student
- John E. King, Samford trustee, church/community relations specialist, Birmingham Metro Baptist Association
- Jewel Littleton '05, '10, Samford overseer, president of Samford Black Alumni Association, director of educational advancement, City of Birmingham.
- Anthony Overton, professor and chair, Howard College of Arts and Sciences' Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences.
- Jennifer Davis Rash '07, president and editor-in-chief, *The Alabama Baptist*
- Lane Smith, director, Samford's Student Financial Services
- Sharon Stuart '87, '90, Samford trustee, partner, Christian & Small LLP
- Danny Wood '99, Samford trustee, senior pastor, Shades Mountain Baptist Church
- Rusty Yerkes, associate professor of finance, Brock School of Business

Ex-officio Members

- William J. Stevens '70, chairman, Samford Board of Trustees, retired president and chief executive officer, Motion Industries, Birmingham
- Clark Watson '81, Samford General Counsel and past chair Samford Board of Trustees
- Michael D. Morgan, Samford assistant to the president, search committee secretary