



JAMES PETRO BIOGRAPHY

Service to the public and the higher education system has been a cornerstone of James Petro's life.

His March 14 appointment to Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents capped nearly three decades of service to the state of Ohio, during which he was the first Ohio Attorney General to argue a case in front of the United States Supreme Court in more than 30 years.

As Chancellor, Petro leads the University System of Ohio, which is one of the largest comprehensive systems of public higher education in the nation. The University System of Ohio bears primary responsibility for raising the educational attainment of Ohioans.

A native of Brooklyn, Ohio, Petro previously served as Ohio Auditor from 1995 to 2002, providing financial and performance oversight to Ohio's universities and other state agencies, and as Ohio Attorney General from 2003 to 2006, when he served as the chief legal officer to the state's universities.

Petro spent 28 years as an elected official, serving as a state representative, Cuyahoga County Commissioner, and Rocky River City Councilman and Director of the city.

In the fall of 2002, Petro successfully defended an Ohio law banning late-term abortions in front of the U.S. Supreme Court by a vote of 9-0.

In 2006, Petro ran for the Republican nomination for Governor of the state of Ohio. He was defeated by then-Ohio Secretary of State Ken Blackwell.

In 2010, Petro and his wife, Nancy Petro, coauthored the book "Fatal Justice," which addresses eight myths that lead to wrongful convictions in the American criminal

justice system. “False Justice” follows true stories while defining legislative reforms to a system that, Petro believes, places innocent people in prison.

Petro’s achievements include appointment to the Ohio Public Defender Commission by the Supreme Court of Ohio in 2010; selection as an “Ohio Super Lawyer” by Law & Politics magazine and Cincinnati Magazine in 2006; recipient of a Legacy Award and Visionary Leadership Award from the Ohio Chief of Police in 2005 and 2006; recipient of a March Fong Eu National Achievement Award from the National Rotary Association in 2005, as well as several notable awards from previous years.

Petro earned a law degree from Case Western Reserve University and a bachelor’s degree in history from Denison University. He also received an honorary doctorate from The University of Toledo in 2000.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO SPRING COMMENCEMENT

Address from Jim Petro,

Ohio Board of Regents Chancellor

Toledo (Savage Arena) – Sunday, May 8, 2011 – 2:00 p.m.

Thank you. It is really a pleasure to be here. I thank Dr. Jacobs, the trustees and other people on stage today.

Ohioans. That's what the people expect me to do. And that's what I am determined to achieve.

So I'm looking at 900 new graduates. This is a very big deal. No need to concern yourselves with the big picture, at least not today. This is a celebration. I'm grateful to have been invited here to share.

Most of you know how important higher education can be. It's about the only pathway to the American middle class.

I don't have to belabor that point. You are all aware of a study last year that found that an astounding 60 percent of young people in the Toledo area are enrolled in college. The highest in the nation's metropolitan areas.

UT has a high graduation rate for a school with open enrollment. It's sinking in here in Toledo.

A college education is about more than economic advancement. Your degree will enrich your soul.

When I got my law degree, I remember my wife asking me what I was going to do. I was in law school when we got married. My response was I wanted to try to do something different every four years. I got away with that! It should have terrified her at the time. But with satisfaction, it's the way my career has gone.

I've been in the private sector, into public service. I've litigated, written legislation. I was a state auditor. And now I seek to advance our causes of economic growth.

Little of this I have done ... doors open and I step through. I'm always excited by a new challenge. I have very few regrets.

None of those doors would have opened, had I not gotten an education. I'm not suggesting you change your career every four years. But you never know what you can reach out for.

This brings me to this advice based on my years of experience and limited wisdom. Don't worry, I had to sit through a few of these speeches, too.

I want leave you with three thoughts:

Don't let this be the end of it all. Education goes on for your entire life. It doesn't end with this degree. Learning must continue. Certainly, even when you don't have to take tests. The thing the faculty here taught you was how to think.

Secondly, never forget your degree imposes obligations on you. Much more is expected of you. Your ranks will provide the leaders. Give back. Volunteer. Maybe go into public service. It's up to you. But you can serve in many ways. All of these require your service and you'll find the right one. Be there for us. We'll need your help.

Finally, I hope you will encourage a return to civility in public discourse. I always value an open marketplace of ideas. I'm dismayed when I hear discuss30.160.004 Te2(2 0 1d]kB-2(ons)-1(

