1.1.2 The Presidents

Formerly Known As Policy Number:
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David Starr Jordan, a world-famed ichthyologist, was 40 years old when he was selected in 1891 by Senator and Mrs. Stanford to be the first president. He served until 1913 and thereafter was Chancellor and Chancellor Emeritus until his death in 1931.

John Casper Branner, Professor of Geology and Vice President of the University, served as President from 1913 until his retirement in 1915.

Ray Lyman Wilbur, member of the Stanford class of 1896, was elected third President in 1915 after a medical career in practice and as Dean of the Stanford Medical School. He retired in 1942 and then was Chancellor until his death in 1949.

Donald Bertrand Tresidder’s time as fourth President was cut short by his death in 1948. Holder of Stanford A.B. and M.D. degrees, he had served as a University trustee.

J. E. Wallace Sterling, holder of a Stanford Ph.D. in History, was installed as Stanford’s fifth President in 1949. Upon his retirement in 1968, he became Chancellor and served until his death in 1985.

Kenneth Sanborn Pitzer, a noted chemist and former President of Rice University, became the sixth President of Stanford in December 1968 and served until his resignation in September 1970.

Richard Wall Lyman, seventh President, took office in September 1970 and served until August 1980 at which time he accepted the presidency of the Rockefeller Foundation. He had been Vice-President and Provost and Professor of British History. He returned to Stanford in 1988 to serve as Professor of History and Director of the Institute for International Studies until retirement in 1991. He is currently the J.E. Wallace Sterling Professor in the Humanities, Emeritus.

Donald Kennedy was Stanford’s eighth President, serving from September 1980 through August 1992. Prior to his appointment he had been Vice President and Provost and Professor of Biological Sciences. He remains Professor of Biological Sciences and holds the Bing Professorship of Environmental Science, Emeritus.

Gerhard Casper served as the ninth President of the University from September 1992 to August 2000. He is currently the Peter and Helen Bing Professor in Undergraduate Education, Professor of Law, and Senior Fellow at the Institute for International Studies.

John L. Hennessy, served as the tenth President of the University from September 2000 to August 2016. He is currently the Shriram Family Director of the Knight-Hennessy Scholars Program and Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science.

Marc Tessier-Lavigne, became the eleventh President of the University and the Bing Presidential Professor in September 2016.