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Dr. Fred Carter, Francis Marion University President, to Receive 2026 Global Vision Award

COLUMBIA, S.C. (October 7, 2026) — The Columbia World Affairs Council is pleased to announce Dr. Fred Carter, president of Francis Marion University, as the 2026 Global Vision Award recipient. He will be honored at a black-tie gala on Tuesday, December 1, at the Columbia Museum of Art, for a lifetime of public service and leadership that has advanced South Carolina's interest and influence around the world. This is the 33rd year the Columbia World Affairs Council has presented the award to a leader whose contributions have made a significant impact on projecting South Carolina globally.

Dr. Carter is the longest serving university president in South Carolina. He assumed the presidency of Francis Marion University in 1999, leading the University through a period of extensive growth and development. He has presided over the start of two dozen academic initiatives, including the development of three doctoral programs and the creation of a School of Health Sciences. Under Dr. Carter's leadership, FMU's International Programs excelled to include 11 semester-long exchange programs with universities in seven different countries and travel studies to unique instructional and research sites, such as FMU's Wildsumaco Biological Research station in Ecuador, RPTU University Kaiserslautern-Landau in Germany, the University of Prince Edward Island in Canada, Carlow College, St. Patrick's in Ireland, the University of Burgos in Spain, De Montfort University in England, and the Rennes School of Business in France.

"This is a very special honor, made all the more meaningful by the fact that Governor Carroll Campbell, Governor David Beasley and Senator Hugh Leatherman also received it," Carter said. "Those three were truly masterful at charming our international partners. But of course, all of those collaborative efforts would have been for naught if the Columbia World Affairs Council and college faculties across the state hadn't been so successful in sustaining them.

"Four decades ago, Carroll Campbell reminded us that our future as a great country was dependent upon having other great countries stand alongside us. That observation has never been more relevant or timely."

Dr. Carter's long career has been devoted to public service. From 1987 to 1991, he served as senior executive assistant to South Carolina Governor Carroll Campbell, who received the inaugural Global Vision Award in 1994. He then served as the executive director of the South Carolina Budget and Control Board from 1991 to 1999. In 2003, Dr. Carter

took a sabbatical from academics to serve as chief of staff to Governor Mark Sanford.

During his time leading the State Budget & Control Board, Dr. Carter helped establish many of South Carolina's international state relationships, including the agreement with Rhineland Palatinate, Germany, which celebrates 30 years of partnership in 2027. Currently, he chairs the South Carolina Commission for International Cooperation and Agreements, which he helped establish, and now oversees many of the state partnerships he helped forge. Dr. Carter also supported SC's World Class Partnership project, an international high school cultural and teacher exchange program which created more than 25 international sister schools from Socastee to Pendleton.

"Fred Carter is a master of bringing people of different backgrounds together for the common good," said Fred Monk, chair emeritus of Columbia World Affairs Council. "His leadership on the state level forged South Carolina's global reputation. Since then, for the past three decades, he has helped create thousands of first-generation college graduates in South Carolina who are now imbued with a global perspective."

Among Dr. Carter's numerous awards and recognitions are the South Carolina Order of the Palmetto and honorary degrees from the College of Charleston, Lander University and The Citadel. Carter served on active duty as an infantry officer in the U.S. Marine Corps, retiring as a Colonel in the Marine Corps Reserve.

"President Carter continues to have a tremendous impact on the State of South Carolina," said Bob Coble, chair of Columbia World Affairs Council Board of Directors. "The relationships he forged during his public service, and continues to nurture through his academic leadership, have positioned our state as an exemplar of prosperous international cooperation shaping the next generations of global pioneers."

Founded in 1993, Columbia World Affairs Council showcases South Carolina globally through insightful educational programming and innovative international exchanges. Through its vast network of regional and international partners, the Council continues developing opportunities to increase economic prosperity and global awareness while advancing South Carolina as an international destination. Additionally, the Council serves as an economic development partner and administrator of the sister-city relationships for the City of Columbia. Nationally, the Council is a member organization of Global Ties U.S., assisting the U.S. Department of State in hosting visiting international leadership delegations; and the World Affairs Councils of America, the largest grassroots organization in the U.S. dedicated to inspiring, educating, and engaging Americans in international affairs and the critical global issues of our times.

The Global Vision Award was established in 1994 and the first recipient was Governor Carroll A. Campbell. The 2025 Global Vision Award was given to David M. Beasley, recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the World Food Programme in his role as executive director (2017-23), South Carolina Governor (1995-99), and now Distinguished Professor of Practice & Public Service at the University of South Carolina School of Law.

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