

MEMORANDUM

December 14, 2015

Dear FIU Family:

With tremendous sadness and great respect and appreciation for his legacy, I inform you that President Gregory B. Wolfe passed away Saturday evening. FIU's third president took the helm in February of 1979 after a distinguished career in international diplomatic service. A World War II veteran, Dr. Wolfe had served as an intelligence analyst for the U.S. State Department and worked on the White House staffs of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. The son of Russian immigrants, he was a linguist fluent in Spanish, French, German and Portuguese who earned a Ph.D. at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. From 1968-1974, Dr. Wolfe served as president of Portland State University in Oregon.

Dr. Wolfe set out to ensure that FIU would be "higher education's beacon in Miami." During his tenure, he succeeded in winning legislative approval and funding to move FIU from an upper division university to a full, four-year university. FIU's inaugural group of freshman arrived on Aug. 26, 1981, and they were feted as the "First-Class First Class." Under his leadership, three new schools were added: the School of Engineering, the School of Nursing and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. Dr. Wolfe also employed his personal expertise in world affairs to continue to foster FIU's specialization in international studies.

Dr. Wolfe is credited for the development of the Biscayne Bay Campus. Under his direction the campus added its first student residential housing, a new student center, an aquatic center and a library, and began offering a host of adult education programs. In recognition of these accomplishments, the student center - known as the Wolfe University Center - bears his name.

Upon his resignation in 1986, the Miami Herald editorial pages praised his presidency. "This young institution gained a new sense of identity and direction under Dr. Wolfe's leadership. He was especially adept at articulating a vision of FIU as a truly international, multi-cultural institution serving Florida's most populous region and beyond." Dr. Wolfe for years remained a distinguished professor in FIU's Department of International Relations.

Charismatic and elegant, Dr. Wolfe and his lovely wife, former FIU first lady Mary Ann Wolfe, helped move the university forward at a time when it was still the new kid on the block. Through their commitment they put FIU on the map. Our thoughts today are with Mary Ann and the couple's family.

We, the FIU family, have lost one of our own: a visionary leader equally at home hobnobbing with heads of state, serving breakfast to FIU students – which he and Mary Ann were known to do – and dancing with the late Ella Fitzgerald when she visited campus in the 1980s. It is our great fortune that he served us so well.

Sympathy cards can be sent to the Wolfe family at 301 186 Street, Sunny Isles, FL 33160. A memorial service is tentatively planned for next month at the Biscayne Bay Campus. More information will be forthcoming.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Rosenberg', with a long, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the right.

Mark B. Rosenberg  
President