

Yale Chief Executive Leadership Institute Presents Shirley Tilghman, 19th President of Princeton University, with the Yale Legend in Leadership Award

Shirley M. Tilghman, 19th president of Princeton University, will accept the Legend in Leadership Award from the Yale Chief Executive Leadership Institute on January 23, 2024, at the Yale Higher Education Leadership Summit in New Haven, Connecticut. The award will be presented by Peter Salovey, 23rd president, Yale University; Joanne Berger-Sweeney, 22nd president, Trinity College; and Gabrielle Starr, 10th president, Pomona College.

Shirley Tilghman is president emerita and professor emerita of molecular biology and public affairs at Princeton University. An exceptional teacher and a world-renowned scholar and leader in the field of molecular biology, she served on the Princeton faculty for 15 years before being named president in 2001.

Summit organizer Jeffrey Sonnenfeld, senior associate dean for leadership studies at the Yale School of Management, commented: “We are thrilled to honor Shirley Tilghman, whose trailblazing accomplishments span groundbreaking scholarly research to countless triumphs as Princeton’s first female president.

“A widely admired scholar of molecular biology, President Tilghman’s work in molecular genetics includes several novel discoveries that have enhanced our understanding of gene behavior and genetic imprinting. Her many pioneering discoveries include demonstrating that the globin gene was spliced and researching the effect of gene insertion in embryonic cells.

“With such sterling scholarly credentials, it is hardly surprising that this renowned physical scientist presided over the launch of countless new academic initiatives during her time as president of Princeton, including the creation of a new center for African American Studies, the Lewis Center for the Arts, the Princeton Neuroscience Institute, and the Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment, in addition to the renewal of several physical science departments such as the Chemistry Department.

“President Tilghman made Princeton more accessible and affordable than ever before, increasing funding for financial aid as well as dramatically increasing student enrollment with the opening of new residential colleges.

“President Tilghman embodies both inspiring academic leadership and scholarly rigor, and there is no question that under President Tilghman Princeton accomplished what she once identified as her essential mission as university president: to enable her colleagues to better address the most critical issues and expand the frontiers of knowledge, not just in science and technology, but in social policy, in public policy, and in understanding the nature of the human condition.”

Tilghman, a native of Canada, received her Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario, in 1968. After two years of secondary school teaching in Sierra Leone, West Africa, she obtained her doctoral degree in biochemistry from Temple University in Philadelphia.

During postdoctoral studies at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), she made a number of groundbreaking discoveries while participating in cloning the first mammalian gene, and then continued to make scientific breakthroughs as an independent investigator at the Institute for Cancer Research in Philadelphia and as an adjunct associate professor of human genetics and biochemistry and biophysics at the University of Pennsylvania. A member of the National Research Council committee that set the blueprint for the U.S. effort in the Human Genome Project, Tilghman also was one of the founding members of the National Advisory Council of the Human Genome Project for the NIH.

As Princeton's 19th president, Tilghman led Princeton's expansion of its undergraduate and graduate student bodies and instituted a four-year college system. Upon the successful completion of her tenure in June 2013, she returned to the Princeton faculty.

Tilghman is renowned for her continuing national leadership on behalf of women in science and for promoting efforts to make the early careers of young scientists as meaningful and productive as possible. In 2002, Tilghman was one of five winners of the L'Oréal-UNESCO Award for Women in Science. In the following year, she received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society for Developmental Biology, and in 2007, she was awarded the Genetics Society of America Medal for outstanding contributions to her field.

Tilghman is a member of the American Philosophical Society, the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Medicine, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Royal Society of London. She serves as a trustee of Amherst College, the Institute for Advanced Study, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Simons Foundation. She is a director of The Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, the Hypothesis Fund, and a Fellow of the Corporation of Harvard College, and is an external science advisor for the Science Philanthropy Alliance.

The Legend in Leadership Award was created 25 years ago to honor current and former CEOs and university presidents who serve as living legends to inspire leaders across industries, sectors, and nations. Past recipients include: Hanna Gray, 10th President, University of Chicago; Andrew Hamilton, President, New York University; Lawrence S. Bacow, 29th President, Harvard University; Freeman A. Hrabowski III, President, University of Maryland, Baltimore County; Donna E. Shalala, former President, University of Miami, and 18th secretary of health and human services; Johnnetta B. Cole, president emerita of the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, and 7th president of Spelman College; Ruth Simmons, president of Prairie View A&M University, and 18th president of Brown University; Steven Spielberg, filmmaker and CEO, Amblin Partners; Mary Barra, CEO, General Motors; Indra Nooyi, chair & CEO, PepsiCo; Arne M. Sorenson, CEO, Marriot International; Brian C. Cornell, CEO, Target; Mary T. Barra, chairman and CEO, General Motors Company; Brian Moynihan, chairman and CEO, Bank of America; David M. Rubenstein, co-founder and co-executive chairman, The Carlyle Group; Leonard S. Schleifer, president and CEO, and George D. Yancopoulos, president and chief scientific officer, Regeneron Pharmaceuticals; Brian Roberts, CEO, Comcast; Marillyn Hewson CEO, Lockheed Martin; Jamie Dimon, CEO, JPMorgan Chase; and Ken Frazier, chairman & CEO, Merck. A full list of recipients can be found [online](#).

The summit theme is “Defining the Campus Community: Your School’s Societal Cross Section or Your School’s Model Meritocracy.” A group of university presidents and board chairs from globally renowned colleges and universities will engage in lively, candid discussions at this invitation-only leaders’ conference hosted by the Yale Chief Executive Leadership Institute at the Yale School of Management.

Conference partners are TIAA, Russell Reynolds Associates, and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.