

Mr. Paul Wright, University of Michigan, 1979 - 2010



It is with great pleasure that I have been given the opportunity to summarize the distinguished career of Mr. Paul Wright. As is all too often the case, my remarks will only scratch the surface of Paul's many contributions to the University of Michigan. Paul is a person of integrity who cares deeply about his family, his community, his church and the University of Michigan. Paul also has many outside interests including history, genealogy and sports to name a few. Many of you have worked and interacted with Paul throughout the years and no doubt have your own stories to share.

Paul Wright began working for the University of Michigan on June 18, 1979. He came to the Office of the Registrar after a career in the financial sector. Like most operations during the late 1970's and early 1980's the processes in the office were far less automated (yet no less important). Nonetheless, they still had to register 35,423 students, process the thousands of adds and drops, assess and adjust tuition, record grades, issue transcripts and diplomas. Paul oversaw a large portion of the records area and worked closely with the then "central data processing" group. As with most things at the University of Michigan, the rules and processes were decentralized and the "exception" seemed to be the "rule."

A decade later, 1989, enrollment grew to 36,338 while Paul assumed additional responsibilities, including overseeing the Residency unit in the Office of the Registrar. Paul would dream about the definition of "domicile" as it related to determining students' residency classification for tuition purposes. It was during this 1980's that Paul's involvement with AACRAO and MACRAO grew. Paul served on the Graduate and Professional Studies committees in 1981-82, 1983-84, and 1986-87. Paul served on the Registrar's Practices committee in 1987-88, 1988-89, and 1989-90 (chair). He also made time to serve on the MACRAO local arrangements committee in 1986.

By the 1999 enrollment was at 37,828 and Paul was given additional responsibilities in the Office of the Registrar. It was during the 1990's that Paul assumed responsibility for several key functions in the office, including NCAA certification, procurement and budget, and human resources. As the same time, like at many of our institutions, large scale student, financial and human resource systems (e.g., Banner, Datatel, and Peoplesoft) were being implemented. Paul's expertise and institutional knowledge contributed to the University of Michigan's successful implementation of Peoplesoft. Paul's involvement with MACRAO continued. He served as MACRAO Treasurer in 1996-97, 1997-98, and 1998-99. He also was the MACRAO Newsletter Editor in 1994-95 and 1995-96.

Paul's expertise in the areas of human resources and finances were critical to the office's transformation in the last 10 years. Moving from a staff of over 75 FTE with largely manually processes to a present day staff of 50 FTE with largely automated processes required a competent, fair and steady hand. And to complicate matters more, this was all occurring during a time of budget retrenchment.

As you can see, Paul led a very busy and very productive professional life. At the same time, Paul always considered family and community a priority. He is a devoted husband, father and grandfather. He is fully engaged and committed to his family – a role model for us all.

Paul, on behalf of the Office of the Registrar at the University of Michigan, we thank you and wish you all our best.

Sincerely,

Paul Robinson
University Registrar
University of Michigan – Ann Arbor

