

Richard Wilson Riley*Doctor of Laws*

Richard W. Riley, United States Secretary of Education from 1993 to 2001 and the 111th Governor of South Carolina (1979-87), is Distinguished University Professor of Education at the University of South Carolina and Distinguished Professor of Government, Politics, and Public Leadership at the Richard W. Riley Institute at Furman University. The College of Education at Winthrop University bears his name. The Christian Science Monitor called Governor Riley “one of the great statesmen of education in this century” for his devotion to public education both as governor of his home state and as the nation’s top educational leader for eight years. During his tenure with the Department of Education, Secretary Riley help launch historic initiatives to raise academic standards, improve instruction for the poor and disadvantaged, increase parental involvement in education, expand loans to help more Americans attend college, and prepare young Americans for the world of work. As Governor of South Carolina, he initiated the Education Improvement Act, heralded at the time to be “the most comprehensive educational reform measure in the United States.” In 1986, the *Washington Monthly* called Riley “the best governor in America—and you’ve never heard of him.” Two decades later, Richard Riley is hailed as one whose efforts on behalf of public education have truly made a difference in the classroom and in the workplace, but most of all in the hearts and minds of the many thousands of young people whose lives have been touched by the programs and initiatives he set in motion.