

Bridgeport honors University of Bridgeport President with Neil A. Salonen Day

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UB NEWS

University of Bridgeport News



UB President Neil A. Salonen and his wife Rebecca at Caribe Youth League's annual gala on February 24. Mayor Ganim proclaimed "Neil A. Salonen Day" in Bridgeport; CYL honored UB's First Couple with matching jackets.

Neil A. Salonen and his wife Rebecca are recognized by city leaders and the Bridgeport Caribe Youth League for providing opportunities that uplift the community

Bridgeport Mayor Joseph P. Ganim and Bridgeport Caribe Youth League (BCYL) have honored University of Bridgeport (UB) President Neil A. Salonen for successfully guiding the school to new levels of success while forging partnerships that benefit the larger Bridgeport community.



From left: John Torres, Mayor Joseph P. Ganim, UB President Neil Salonen, Rebecca Salonen

Standing before approximately 250 guests and dignitaries at the annual BCYL gala, the mayor proclaimed February 24 to be "Neil A. Salonen Day" in the City of Bridgeport.

President Salonen is stepping down on June 30, 2018. His successor has not yet been named.

"President Salonen exemplifies community by opening the University of Bridgeport's doors to local organizations, such as the Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders," Ganim said as President Salonen and his wife of 47 years, Rebecca, looked on.

BCYL Executive Director John Torres said Caribe honored President Salonen for his years of support.

"In 2003, I asked President Neil A. Salonen for space for Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders to use for our Saturday Caribe Academy, and we've been there ever since! In 2011, he was instrumental in establishing a University of Bridgeport scholarship for Caribe students. This coming May, more BCYL scholars will be graduating from UB -- a total of eight thus far!" Torres said.

"What's exciting is six of the eight University of Bridgeport graduates are first-time college graduates in their families! To date, 15 Caribe students have received four-year scholarships to the University of Bridgeport totaling over \$525,000, so it wasn't difficult to decide who we wanted to honor at our 15th Anniversary Gala. President Salonen has been an integral part in fulfilling our educational mission, and we are forever in his debt."

President Salonen joined the UB Board Trustees in 1992 before serving as its chairman in 1995. He was appointed president in 2000.

Under his watch, UB has more than tripled its revenue, balanced its budget, and steadily increased enrollment to over 5,000 students.

The University has also pioneered numerous academic programs, including multi- and interdisciplinary degrees that bring together colleges and experts from across campus. The school's first online courses in human nutrition were the first distance-learning classes offered by any Connecticut college or university, and its current distance-learning curricula (bursting with over 250 programs) have been consistently been ranked among the best in the nation by U.S. News & World Report.

Off campus, President Salonen has led campaigns to make University faculty and resources -- from labs to innovation centers and athletic facilities -- available to the community. More recently, UB and the City teamed up to co-develop softball fields at Seaside Park. They will be used by UB athletics, Caribe Youth League, and other community sports groups.

Nationally, President Salonen has served as a past member of the American Council on Education's Commission on Adult Learning, the Presidents' Leadership Group of the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention. He is currently the Chair of the East Coast Conference (ECC), formerly known as the New York Collegiate Athletic Conference (NYCAC), and has served on the NAICU Committee on Accountability.

He and Rebecca Salonen are very active in other local civic affairs; notably, President Salonen was one of three co-chairs of the Mayor's Transition Task Force, December 2015-February 2016.