

## David J. Skorton

Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution

January 1, 2016

Dr. David J. Skorton is the 13th Secretary of the Smithsonian. He assumed his position July 1, 2015.

As Secretary, Skorton oversees 19 museums and galleries, 20 libraries, the National Zoo and numerous research centers, including the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute and the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center. He is responsible for an annual budget of \$1.3 billion, 6,500 employees and 6,300 volunteers. The Smithsonian's federal appropriation for fiscal year 2015 is \$819.5 million, which accounts for 62 percent of the Institution's funding. The Smithsonian generates additional funding from private contributions and business revenues.

Skorton, 65, a board-certified cardiologist, previously was the president of Cornell University, a position he held from July 2006. He was also a professor in the Departments of Medicine and Pediatrics at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City and in Cornell's Department of Biomedical Engineering at the College of Engineering. His research focus is congenital heart disease and cardiac imaging and image processing. Skorton is the first physician to lead the Smithsonian.

Under Skorton's leadership, Cornell partnered with Technion-Israel Institute of Technology to win an international competition to create a new type of graduate school, Cornell NYC Tech, under development on Roosevelt Island in New York City. The graduate school, currently operating in space donated by Google Inc. in Manhattan, combines deep technical knowledge with real-world experience and an entrepreneurial culture.

Skorton was also a highly effective fundraiser at Cornell, leading his team to raise more than \$5 billion during his presidency.

Before becoming Cornell's president, Skorton was president of the University of Iowa from 2003 to 2006 and a member of its faculty for 26 years. At the University of Iowa, he completed the first billion-dollar fundraising campaign in the state.

An ardent and nationally recognized supporter of the arts and humanities, Skorton has called for a national dialogue to emphasize the importance of funding for these disciplines.

He asserts that supporting the arts and humanities is a wise investment in the future of the country.

Skorton is a strong proponent of business–university partnerships. He has been active in innovation and economic development at the state and national levels to bring business and universities together toward diversifying regional economies. He is a member and past chair of the Business-Higher Education Forum, an independent, nonprofit organization of industry CEOs, leaders of colleges and universities, and foundation executives.

Skorton is a pioneer in applying computer analysis and processing techniques to cardiac imaging; he has published two major texts and numerous articles, reviews and book chapters on cardiac imaging and image processing.

Since 1980, he has been part of a cohort of physicians around the world who specialize in caring for adolescents and adults with congenital heart disease. At the University of Iowa, he co-founded the university’s Adolescent and Adult Congenital Heart Disease Clinic. He also helped found the Society for Adult Congenital Cardiac Disease, now the International Society for Adult Congenital Heart Disease.

Skorton was elected to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies (now the National Academy of Medicine) and is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. A national leader in research ethics, he was the charter president of the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs Inc., the first group organized specifically to accredit human research protection programs.

His memberships and board service have included the American College of Cardiology, American Heart Association, Council on Competitiveness and Korea America Friendship Society. He is a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Skorton is an avid amateur musician who plays the flute and the saxophone. He worked as a musician in the Chicago area and cohosted “As Night Falls—Latin Jazz,” a weekly program on the University of Iowa’s public FM radio station.

He is currently a Distinguished Professor at Georgetown University. Skorton earned his bachelor’s degree in psychology in 1970 and his M.D. in 1974, both from Northwestern University. He completed his medical residency and fellowship in cardiology at the University of California, Los Angeles in 1979. He was born in Milwaukee, Wis., and moved to Los Angeles with his family when he was 9 years old. He is married to Robin L. Davisson, The

Andrew Dickson White Professor of Molecular Physiology at Cornell University. Davisson is also on the faculty of Georgetown University Medical Center.

Skorton succeeds Wayne Clough, who retired from the Smithsonian in December 2014. Albert Horvath, the Smithsonian's Under Secretary for Finance and Administration and CFO, served as Acting Secretary for the six-month period between Clough's departure and Skorton's arrival.