

David Jan Skorton, MD

David J. Skorton, MD, is president and CEO of the AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges), which represents the nation's medical schools, teaching hospitals and health systems, and academic societies.

Dr. Skorton began his leadership of the AAMC in July 2019 after a distinguished career in government, higher education, and medicine. In his first year at the AAMC, he addressed social issues that affect health, guided the AAMC through a pandemic, and built a multiyear strategic plan to tackle the nation's most intractable challenges in health and health care, working to make academic medicine more diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

Dr. Skorton has contributed to the national response to the coronavirus pandemic through frequent interactions with senior government officials and appearances in national media. When national protests erupted over police brutality, Dr. Skorton was an outspoken voice for ending systemic racism in academic medicine and addressing persistent health disparities.

Previously, Dr. Skorton served as the 13th secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, where he oversaw 19 museums, 21 libraries, the National Zoo, numerous research centers, and education programs. Prior to that, he served as president of two universities: Cornell University (2006 to 2015) and the University of Iowa (2003 to 2006), where he also served on the faculty for 26 years and specialized in the treatment of adolescents and adults with congenital heart disease. A pioneer of cardiac imaging and computer processing techniques, he also was co-director and co-founder of the University of Iowa Adolescent and Adult Congenital Heart Disease Clinic.

A Distinguished Professor at Georgetown University, Dr. Skorton is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Philosophical Society, as well as a lifetime member of the Council on Foreign Relations and a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He also served on the AAMC Board of Directors from 2010 to 2013, and 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.

Throughout his career, Dr. Skorton has focused on issues of diversity and inclusion. A nationally recognized supporter of the arts and humanities, as well as an accomplished jazz musician and composer, Dr. Skorton believes that many of society's thorniest problems can only be solved by combining the sciences, social sciences, and the arts and humanities.

Dr. Skorton earned his BA and MD degrees from Northwestern University. He completed his medical residency and fellowship in cardiology and was chief medical resident at the University of California, Los Angeles. He is married to Robin Davisson, PhD, an award-winning scientist, who is a professor of molecular physiology at Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine and Weill Cornell Medical College, as well as a professor of medicine at Georgetown University and an emerging visual artist.