

Dr. Larry R. Thompson, President

Ringling College of Art and Design

Biographical Overview



Dr. Larry R. Thompson began his ninth year as President of Ringling College of Art and Design this past summer. An energetic, innovative, and visionary community leader, Larry is passionate about the arts and education. As President of Ringling College of Art and Design since July 1999, he has worked tirelessly to infuse his spirit of inclusion throughout campus by celebrating diversity, encouraging freedom of expression, supporting new ways of teaching and learning, and encouraging risk-taking to enhance the overall academic experience.

Aside from his “full-time” job, Larry is involved in a myriad of volunteer endeavors. He is immediate Past President of the Sarasota County Arts Council, serves as Leadership Spokesman for the Innovation 41 Art and Cultural Corridor Project, and is on the boards of Coastal Behavioral Healthcare, the Community Health Corporation for Sarasota Memorial Hospital, SunTrust, Sarasota Season of Sculpture, and the Sarasota Chamber of Commerce. He currently serves on the newly formed Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County Partners Council.

Prior to joining Ringling College, Thompson was President and CEO of the Flint Cultural Center in Michigan – a 30-acre campus encompassing the nine leading cultural institutions of the Greater Flint Area. He served in that capacity from 1993-1999.

Before crossing the lake to Michigan, he was founding Director and CEO of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland, Ohio, where he served for four years. Thompson was responsible for making the Hall of Fame happen, including raising the money for it, working with architect I. M. Pei to design it, and getting it ready to be constructed.

In his earlier career, Thompson served for seven years as Special Assistant to the President of The Ohio State University. His responsibilities involved working on legal issues affecting the University and serving as a management troubleshooter for various administrative departments.

Larry Thompson is a lawyer and an educator. He received his Juris Doctorate summa cum laude from The Ohio State University and practiced law for a number of years with a large firm in Columbus. He has a Master of Science in educational administration and counseling from California State University Los Angeles. He was an adjunct professor at the University of Michigan-Flint in the Honors department and taught as an adjunct professor in the College of Law at Ohio State for six years.

Thompson was recognized as Arts Administrator of the Year 1997 presented by Arts Management News for exemplary and distinguished work in the field of arts administration. He was a recipient of the Friend of Education award by Delta Kappa Gamma Society International for outstanding endeavors in support of education, the National Association of College and University Attorneys Fellow award for exemplary service on behalf of college and university clients, and the Person of Vision Award presented by the Board of Governors of Prevent Blindness Florida. This October, the West Coast Florida Chapter of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) honored him with the 2007 Civic Achievement Award, and the Sarasota County Arts Council presented him with the Arts Leadership Award. In December, 2007 he was one of three finalists in *Tampa Bay CEO Magazine's* “Tampa Bay CEO of the Year.”