

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bernard H. Paiewonsky, Former UVI Board Of Trustees Member, Is Dead At 83

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The University of the Virgin Islands mourns the passing of Trustee Emeritus Bernard H. Paiewonsky, Ph.D., who served on UVI's Board of Trustees for 13 years. He passed away on Aug. 17, 2016, in Bethesda, Md. Funeral services were held on Friday, Aug. 19, at the Congregation B'Nai Tzedek, Potomac, Md. followed by interment at King David Memorial Park, Falls Church, Va. He was 83.

Dr. Paiewonsky was born and raised in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands and was the son of the late Ethel Paiewonsky and the late Ralph M. Paiewonsky, former Governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands, founder of the University, and for whom UVI's St. Thomas Campus Library is named.

After receiving a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Dr. Paiewonsky earned a Master of Arts in Mathematics from Indiana University, a Master of Arts in Engineering from Princeton University, as well a Master of Arts and Ph.D. in Aeronautical Engineering from Princeton University. He had a long and distinguished career as an aeronautical engineer, mathematician, scientist, and researcher. After many years at the Institute for Defense Analysis and work at the White House's Office of Technology, he served as deputy for Advanced Technology for the Secretary of the Air Force.

"Board committees, and the Board, benefitted from his experience gained during his service in the federal government and his knowledge of higher education as an active alumnus of one of the major universities in the United States," said Henry C. Smock, Chairman of the UVI Board of Trustees.

An avid glider pilot, Dr. Paiewonsky contributed his time and energy, over many years, to the Mid-Atlantic Soaring Association, and was a co-founder and editor of the Journal Technical Soaring. He was an active member of the MIT Club of Washington D.C., served on the board of Congregation Bet Chesed, and was the first instructor of his Yiddish Language Group.

"Dr. Paiewonsky served with distinction as a member of the Board of UVI during the period when I served as Chairman," Dr. Auguste E. Rimpel, UVI Board chairman emeritus. "He served as chairman of the Planning Committee during the early years when UVI developed and implemented its first strategic plan. I could always depend on him to bring a balanced perspective of the future development of the University." Dr. Rimpel continued, "He was committed to seeing the legacy of his father continue to be a success. The Board recognized this in naming him an Emeritus Member of the Board."

Dr. Paiewonsky was appointed to the UVI Board of Trustees in 1996 by Gov. Roy L. Schneider and completed his service in December 2009. He served during the tenure of Presidents Dr. Orville E. Kean, Dr. LaVerne E. Ragster and briefly during the tenure of Dr. David Hall. He was a member of the Development, Planning, Ad Hoc Hotel, and the Executive committees of the Board and served, for six years, as the Chair of the Development Committee and also six years as Chair of the Planning Committee.

"Dr. Paiewonsky was a dedicated member of the Board of Trustees," said Alexander Moorhead, former Board chair and present UVI Board vice chairman. "He could be depended upon to attend all meetings of the Board, as well as meetings of committees of the Board on which he served, and, with him, there was no beating around the bush on the subject that was being discussed - he stated his position plainly."

Under his leadership, the development and monitoring of Strategic Plans 2000-2005 and 2006-2012 for the University became a significant function of the Planning Committee. In 2010, he was granted Trustee Emeritus status in honor of his distinguished service to the Board of Trustees. His invaluable contributions to the University and its programs went far beyond the committees on which he served. Continuing in the legacy of his father, Dr. Bernard Paiewonsky exhibited his love of the University of the Virgin Islands through care, commitment and dedication.

In 2012, Trustee Emeritus Bernard Paiewonsky, Ph.D. and his sister Joyce Adolfsen, Esq. established the Ralph and Ethel Paiewonsky Scholarship Fund with a \$10,000 contribution. The endowed fund supports students who are residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands currently pursuing a degree in nursing or business.

“Trustee Paiewonsky was extremely helpful to me when I became President in 2009,” said UVI President David Hall. “He met with me and shared his insights about what I needed to focus on in order to move the University forward. His advice has served me well. I deeply appreciated his wisdom while he was on the Board, and even after he stepped down. His love and passion for UVI were sincere, and he has left an indelible mark upon this institution, and upon me.”

The Board of Trustees and the University of the Virgin Islands family extend condolences to his wife, Mary Paiewonsky, his daughters, Adrienne, Betty and Melissa, his sister Joyce Adolfsen, numerous grandchildren, nieces and nephews as well as the Paiewonsky and Cassinelli families on St. Thomas.

Dr. Paiewonsky will be greatly missed by his UVI family.

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