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Evans Resigns from Board of Regents; Loeffler Becomes Chairman

AUSTIN – Donald L. Evans, chairman of the Board of Regents of the University of Texas System since 1997, resigned from the board Friday in preparation for his service as Secretary of Commerce in the Bush Administration.

Evans sent a letter of resignation to Gov. Rick Perry in which he said: "The opportunity to be of public service to the State of Texas during my term on the Board of Regents has been a high honor and a great privilege. The 15 fine institutions in The University of Texas System are true Texas treasures and will always hold a special place in my heart."

Evans is expected to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate as Secretary of Commerce after the inauguration of George W. Bush.

Tom Loeffler, who has been the board's first vice chairman, became chairman on Evans' resignation. He will serve during the rest of his board term, which expires in February.

Loeffler commented: "Don Evans has done an outstanding job of leading the Board of Regents for the last four years. We all owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude, and we wish him well as he becomes Secretary of Commerce. I have been privileged to serve as vice chairman of the board for the past four years, and I look forward to assuming the duties of chairman for the remainder of my term on the board."

Chancellor R. D. Burck said: "It has been an honor to work with Don Evans during his term on the Board of Regents, where he has served the U. T. System and Texas with great distinction. His chairmanship of the board has been a time of major advancement across the U. T. System.

"That tradition of leadership will be upheld by Tom Loeffler, whose knowledge of the U. T. System and commitment to Texas higher education are unsurpassed. I have had the pleasure of working closely with him throughout the 12 years that he has served on the Board of Regents. The U. T. System is indeed fortunate to have the benefit of his guidance at this time."

Loeffler's term as a regent expires Feb. 1, but he will continue to serve until new regents are appointed by Perry and confirmed by the Texas Senate. The term of Regent Rita C. Clements also expires in February, as does the term for the board seat that has been held by Evans.

The board will elect a new chairman and other officers after new regents are confirmed. The next meeting of the board is in Austin on Feb. 14-15.

Loeffler, of San Antonio, has served two six-year terms as a regent. He was first appointed by Gov. Bill Clements in 1989 and was reappointed by Gov. Bush in 1995. He has chaired the Health Affairs Committee since 1995 and has also served on committees dealing with academic affairs, asset management, facilities planning and business affairs, as well as on the board of the University of Texas Investment Management Co.

Loeffler represented the 21st Congressional District of Texas in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1979 to 1987. He was the first Republican elected to Congress from that district. He served on the House Energy & Commerce, Appropriations, and Budget Committees.

A fourth-generation Texan, Loeffler was born in Fredericksburg in 1946, and grew up on a ranch near Mason. He played football at U. T. Austin, where he earned an undergraduate degree (B.B.A.) in 1968 and a law degree (J.D.) in 1971.

Loeffler was chief legislative counsel to Sen. John Tower. After two years in that job and a short stint as deputy for congressional affairs in the Federal Energy Administration, he became special assistant for legislative affairs to President Gerald Ford in 1975.

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