



COLORADO COLLEGE

Office of Communications

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For Immediate Release

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L. SONG RICHARDSON APPOINTED 14th PRESIDENT OF COLORADO COLLEGE

UC Irvine School of Law dean assumes role on July 1

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. – Dec. 9, 2020 – The Colorado College Board of Trustees today appointed L. Song Richardson the 14th president of Colorado College following a unanimous vote. Richardson, currently the dean and chancellor’s professor of law at University of California Irvine School of Law, will succeed President Jill Tiefenthaler, who led CC for nine years.

Richardson is a legal scholar and lawyer whose research focuses on implicit racial and gender bias. She became UC Irvine School of Law’s dean and chancellor’s professor of law in January 2018, and at that time was the only woman of color to lead a top-30 law school. Her presidency at Colorado College will begin on July 1, 2021.

“Dean Richardson embodies the curiosity, dedication, spirit, commitment and joy that are the essence of CC,” said Susie Burghart, chair of the board of trustees and a 1977 Colorado College graduate. “She is authentic and accessible, a scholar committed to building the resiliency, depth and breadth of students, and a changemaker who will shift CC and our future graduates forward on the path toward antiracism, access and even greater academic excellence.”

Richardson said she was drawn to Colorado College because of its people, its sense of purpose, and its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, increasing access for students, sustainability and innovation.

“I never dreamed that I would be leaving UCI Law, a community that I adore and a school that has achieved unprecedented success in less than 11 years of existence,” Richardson said. “But then I was introduced to Colorado College. Everything about CC resonated with



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me. The more I learned, the more intrigued I was by this community of innovative changemakers and problem-solvers. I am honored to join CC and the Colorado Springs community, and look forward to building a bright future together.”

Richardson, who is Black and Korean, will be the first woman of color to hold the presidency at Colorado College. Acting Co-President Mike Edmonds, who has been serving along with Acting Co-President Robert G. Moore since Tiefenthaler’s departure in July, is the first person of color to serve in the presidential capacity.

Richardson has consulted with public and private entities developing practices to address racial and gender disparities within their organizations and practices. She is also a leading expert on major current issues including race and policing.

“Dean Richardson’s research into racial and gender bias, her thoughtful scholarship and voice on policing and safety, and her dedication to building resiliency in students will move CC’s antiracism and innovation efforts forward as an institution,” Edmonds said. “Her passion for this work will propel our graduates forward to create solutions to some of the most challenging issues in our country and in our world.”

Moore said Richardson’s experience and leadership are an excellent fit for CC.

“Dean Richardson’s commitment to understanding a place, its people, and its core values is evident – and what we’ve found in her aligns with the most important needs of the college,” he said. “I eagerly anticipate the exciting work ahead as she helps us make CC an even greater liberal arts institution.”

The board confirmed Richardson after a nine-month nationwide search conducted by a presidential search committee that included trustees, faculty, staff and students. The committee considered highly accomplished leaders from a pool of more than 150 applicants with diverse backgrounds. The firm Storbeck Search, a member of the Diversified Search Group, provided executive search services.

Jeff Keller, chair of the presidential search committee, said Richardson brings strengths that resonated with the committee.

“Dean Richardson is incredibly accomplished, with a track record of always leaning passionately into opportunity. She fits with our students, who are adventurous by nature, with a desire to take bold but carefully thought-out risks,” said Keller, who also is vice chair



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of the board of trustees, a 1991 CC graduate and parent of a current CC student. “We have found the right person at the right time for Colorado College, and I look forward to watching her lift this already great institution to even greater heights.

Prior to becoming dean at UC Irvine School of Law, Richardson served as interim dean and senior associate dean for academic affairs at UCI School of Law. She holds joint appointments in the Department of Criminology, Law and Society and in the Department of Asian American Studies. She received her AB from Harvard College and her JD from Yale Law School.

Richardson’s interdisciplinary research uses lessons from cognitive and social psychology to study decision-making and judgment. Her scholarship has been published by law journals at Harvard, Yale, Berkeley, Cornell, Duke and Northwestern, among others. She is working on a book that reflects on the current reckoning with anti-Blackness that is occurring across the U.S. and its implications for law and policy.

Richardson’s legal career included partnership at a criminal defense law firm and work as a state and federal public defender. She was an assistant counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., and a Skadden Arps Public Interest Fellow with the National Immigration Law Center in Los Angeles and the Legal Aid Society’s Immigration Unit in Brooklyn, New York.

She has won numerous awards and recognitions. She was honored for contributions to legal education through mentoring, teaching and scholarship; was named one of the top women lawyers in California; and was chosen as one of the two most influential Korean Americans in Orange County, California.

Richardson also is a classically trained pianist who performed twice with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and won numerous major piano competitions, including the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Harvard/Radcliffe concerto competitions.

She is married to artist Kurt Kieffer. They plan to move to Colorado Springs in the coming months.

Richardson joins Colorado College at a time when higher education is challenged due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but CC has remained strong. Yearly applications for admission rose to 10,250 last fall and the selectivity rate moved to 14 percent. In recent years resources for faculty and students were increased, and diversity of the faculty and student body



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increased. Campus buildings were expanded, renovated and constructed, and the new Ed Robson Arena is under construction. CC established an alliance with the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, saw record fundraising success and achieved carbon neutrality. The college's antiracism initiative was launched in 2018.

About Colorado College

Colorado College is a nationally prominent, four-year liberal arts college that was founded in Colorado Springs in 1874. The college operates on the innovative Block Plan, in which its approximately 2,100 undergraduate students take one class at a time in intensive 3½-week segments. In 2016, Colorado College announced an alliance with the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, and the following year the two became the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College, providing innovative, educational and multidisciplinary arts experiences for the campus and Colorado Springs communities. The college also offers a master of arts in teaching degree. For more information, visit www.coloradocollege.edu