



*Pennsylvania College of Optometry
College of Education and Rehabilitation*

*George S. Osborne College of Audiology
College of Health Sciences*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Leadership: Salus University President Dr. Thomas L. Lewis to Introduce President-Designate Rear Admiral Michael H. Mittelman at May 26 Commencement

Elkins Park PA, (May 22, 2013 – Salus University’s commencement on Sunday, May 26 at 2:00p.m. at the Kimmel Center’s Verizon Hall marks the end of an era for the healthcare education community. After 24 years of thoughtful and progressive leadership, Dr. Thomas L. Lewis, OD, PhD will oversee his final commencement as president before passing the baton to his successor.

Stepping into this new role in mid-July is Rear Admiral Michael H. Mittelman, OD, MPH, who brings over 30 years of healthcare industry experience in both military and civilian posts. Dr. Mittelman will address students and faculty during the keynote speech, before participating in a ceremonial gowning where he will receive the chain of office from Dr. Lewis.

Prior to assuming the presidency in 1989, Dr. Lewis, a 1970 graduate of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry, spent 17 years in the halls of the school as an anatomy professor, dean and vice president. He accepted his appointment as president for one simple reason: “I thought I could have more impact – more quickly and effectively.” Dr. Lewis, whose years of experience provided a deep understanding of the changing times of medicine, was the driving force behind numerous advancements and expansions that have guided the organization into the forefront of healthcare education.

His efforts to move the Pennsylvania College of Optometry from a single-purpose school to a multi-purpose institution led to the establishment of Salus University in 2008, which now offers 13 accredited degree programs. Dr. Lewis’ accomplishments as president include

adding an international Master of Science (MSc) degree program in clinical optometry, masters' degree and certificate programs in Orientation and Mobility, and Vision Rehabilitation Teaching, a Doctor of Audiology (AuD) professional degree, a Master of Medical Science (MMS) degree program in Physician Assistant Studies, a wholly online Master of Public Health (MPH) degree program, doctoral and masters programs in Occupational Therapy, and a new Master of Science/PhD dual degree program in Biomedicine.

During his tenure as the institution's second-longest serving president, Dr. Lewis was the primary motivation behind the University's move from Oak Lane to the new Elkins Park campus. He also oversaw the building of the Hafer Student Community Center and renovation of The Eye Institute, the University's largest clinical teaching facility.

Dr. Lewis views his retirement not as the end of his career, but as merely the beginning of the next chapter. "I don't want to unwind," he says. Traveling both nationally and internationally on speaking engagements, Dr. Lewis has not closed the door on the possibility of returning to teaching. In the meantime he enjoys his time with Harriet, his wife of 45 years, their two children and five grandchildren.

Taking on the challenge of filling such big shoes is Deputy Surgeon General of the Navy, Dr. Michael H. Mittelman, who will retire from the Navy next month after 32 years of service. A 1980 graduate of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry, Dr. Mittelman is a Fellow of both the American College of Healthcare Executives and the American Academy of Optometry. In 2012, he received the American Optometric Association's Distinguished Service Award. He is past president of the Armed Forces Optometric Society and recipient of their Orion Award. Throughout his military career, Dr. Mittelman has been stationed around the world and boasts a curriculum vitae that includes posts such as Director of the Medical Service Corps, Command Surgeon for the U.S. Joint Forces Command and US Pacific command, and Deputy Chief of Staff, Human Resources for the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.

When asked about the daunting task of succeeding Dr. Lewis and the future of Salus University, Dr. Mittelman displays focus, decisiveness and passion. "I believe Salus holds a very unique and important place in helping to shape America's healthcare environment. It is my very clear and absolute goal to propel Salus University to beyond what it is today; to the next level of excellence; to become the leading provider of the best-trained health, education and rehabilitation professionals in the country," says Dr. Mittelman, who has outlined a plan to expand the university's academic portfolio. "Dr. Mittelman brings a wealth of experience to

the position of president that includes clinical and research backgrounds,” says Salus University Board of Trustees Chair Jo Surpin. “I am certain that under Dr. Mittelman's leadership Salus will continue to prosper.”

Born in Long Beach, NY and currently residing in the Washington, DC area, Dr. Mittelman views his return to the area as a coming home. “This is where my professional career began,” he says. “Dr. Lewis was not only my teacher and mentor, but also someone whom I have always deeply respected and admired. I feel extremely honored and privileged to lead this great institution.” Dr. Mittelman and his wife Tanis have three daughters.

Salus University's Spring 2013 Commencement will award the degrees of Doctor of Optometry (OD), Doctor of Audiology (AuD), Master of Education in Blindness and Visual Impairment, Master of Science in Low Vision Programs, Master of Public Health (MPH), and the international Master of Science in Clinical Optometry (MSc) to 220 students. Dr. Lewis will welcome the members of the Class of 2013 and their families as he opens the final commencement ceremony of his outstanding career.

Salus University was established by the Pennsylvania College of Optometry (PCO) in July 2008. Now the University's founding college, PCO was founded in Philadelphia, PA in 1919, and has long been recognized as a leader in the education of healthcare professionals. Continuing that legacy, Salus University has three additional colleges: the George S. Osborne College of Audiology, the College of Education and Rehabilitation, and the College of Health Sciences. For information on the thirteen accredited degree programs currently offered by Salus University, please go to: www.salus.edu

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