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Gerald L. Baliles, Former Governor Of Virginia, to Lead University of Virginia's Miller Center

December 16, 2005 -- University of Virginia President John T. Casteen III today named former Virginia Gov. Gerald L. Baliles as the fifth director of the Miller Center of Public Affairs, the leading nonpartisan institution dedicated to studying U.S. national and international policy, with a special emphasis on the American presidency.

“This appointment signals a new direction for one of our most distinguished and productive centers,” Casteen said. “The Miller Center already has a record of unmatched excellence in the work that it does. It is, very simply, the best scholarly center in the world for the study of the presidency and the larger processes of government and democracy generally.”

The Miller Center has made dramatic strides in recent years through the addition of three new presidential oral histories (Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and Bill Clinton), the publication of eight volumes that bring readers into the Oval Office during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, the highly popular Forum programs, and the establishment of National Fellowships in Contemporary History, Public Policy and American Politics.

“Gov. Baliles’ coming to lead the Center is the best possible news as we build on the dominance established in recent years by its publications of major series of presidential recordings, by its educational programs, and by its new ventures involving the papers of persons close to the presidency,” Casteen said. “All of us look forward to supporting the Center as yet another distinguished leader takes its helm, especially so as the importance of its work becomes increasingly visible.”



Baliles' tenure as Virginia's 65th governor from 1986 to 1990 was marked by dramatic success in trade and economic development for the commonwealth. Since then, he has been a partner in the Richmond-based law firm of Hunton & Williams, and has specialized in aviation and international law. Baliles, 65, a 1967 graduate of U.Va.'s School of Law, said he will retire from Hunton & Williams at the end of March, but is not yet ready to stop working.

"I simply am moving from one path of intellectual activity to another," Baliles said of his new position at the University. "I long have been impressed with the work of The Miller Center -- its ambitious initiatives and patient scholarship. I view The Miller Center as a bridge between the academic world and the public policy arena. I welcome the challenge of building upon the accomplishments of the past and exploring ways in which the scope and mission of the Center can be enriched and expanded further."

Former Virginia Gov. A. Linwood Holton Jr., who was instrumental in the founding of the center 30 years ago and who continues as a member of its governing council, believes that the appointment of Baliles is an important milestone in the center's history.

"This is absolutely outstanding news," Holton said. "I am so thankful that Gov. Baliles has agreed to undertake this challenge. He will make wonderful contributions to The Miller Center throughout the years."

Dan Frierson of Chattanooga, Tenn., chairman of the governing council, led the national search to replace Philip Zelikow, who left in January to become counselor of the U.S. Department of State.

"I couldn't be more pleased about this announcement," Frierson said. "To bring in a man of Gov. Baliles' stature and well-known leadership abilities will be great not only for the Miller Center, but for the University as well. The governor brings experience and leadership and appreciation for the academic work that the Center does, and I know he has ideas on how to expand its horizons."

Recognized by colleagues for his emphasis on strategic planning and preparation, Baliles was known as Virginia's "transportation governor" because of the premium he placed on improving transportation in the state. In 1986, Baliles guided a \$422 million-a-year tax package through a special session of the General Assembly to improve Virginia's transportation system, and observers still credit him with both courage and foresight in that effort.

In addition to transportation, Baliles created commissions on education, world trade and child care while governor. In terms of education initiatives, Baliles was able to increase teacher salaries to within \$400 of the national average. In 1989, he hosted the nation's governors in Charlottesville for President George H.W. Bush's summit on education and has always been a staunch supporter of higher education.

Under his leadership, Virginia's per-capita income rose to the highest in the South and ninth highest in the nation during his four years in office. Baliles also pursued a vigorous environmental agenda and has a history of involvement in efforts to clean up the Chesapeake Bay. He was appointed in 2004 to chair a 15-member blue-ribbon panel charged with finding funding to help the cleanup and was named conservationist of the year by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation in 2005.

He has negotiated agreements between airlines and airports and has been involved in negotiations of strategic alliance agreements between airlines. He chaired the Commission to Ensure a Strong Competitive Airlines Industry (National Airline Commission), which issued a 1993 report to President Clinton on ways to revive the airline industry.

Baliles serves on a wide range of corporate boards, commissions and coalitions. As a past chairman of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, he currently chairs the Task Force on the Academic Presidency.

“Kenneth Thompson and Phillip Zelikow laid solid foundations for what Jerry Baliles will build here,” Casteen said. “The good that this new leader will do will accrue to every person who relies on the presidency to sustain our system of government and our shared values.”

Baliles and his wife, Robin, will join the University community on April 1, 2006.

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