

Honoring Xavier's Dr. Norman C. Francis

By Congressman Troy A. Carter Sr.

Editor's note: Dr. Norman C. Francis served as the president of Xavier University of Louisiana from 1968 to 2015. Among many other roles, he was also the chairman of the Louisiana Recovery Authority, the state agency responsible for planning the recovery and rebuilding of Louisiana after Katrina and Rita. He received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from George W. Bush in 2006. The outstanding life of Dr. Norman C. Francis spanned ninety-four years, from 1931 to 2026.

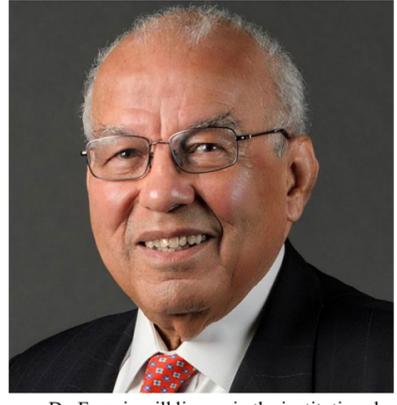
Today, we said farewell to a great man. A giant. A larger-than-life icon whose impact can never be measured in titles alone.

Dr. Norman C. Francis did not simply lead an institution. He shaped generations. He lifted minds. He opened doors that many believed would remain closed forever. His wisdom, discipline, quiet strength, and unwavering faith transformed lives not only in New Orleans, not only in Louisiana, but across this nation and around the world.

His leadership was steady. His reach was global. His influence was personal. As a proud graduate of Xavier University's Class of 1986, I stand as part of a long line of Xavier graduates in my own family, beginning with my mother, Eartha Flemings Carter. Ours is a legacy rooted in faith, discipline, and excellence. We did not simply attend Xavier. We were shaped there. We were refined there. And, like so many families across this city and nation, our story is forever tied to the vision and stewardship of Dr. Francis.

Those of us blessed to be mentored by him carry his lessons within us. Those who encountered him carry his example. And those who follow in his footsteps will continue to walk paths he helped clear with courage and conviction.

We extend our deepest, most heartfelt condolences to his immediate family and to his entire extended family. Your loss is deeply personal, but it is also shared by a grateful university community, a city, a state, and a watching world. We stand with you in sorrow, and we stand with you in gratitude for the gift of his life.



Dr. Francis will live on in the institutions he strengthened, the students he inspired, the leaders he shaped, and the countless lives he touched. May we honor him not only in word, but in action.

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VIRTUAL EVENTS FOR YOUR BUSINESS 2026

Federal Contracting for Small Businesses Webinar
Tuesday, March 10, 2026, 11:00 am–12:30 pm CDT Online
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration
Contact: Irene Gonzalez, 208-334-1673, irene.gonzalez@sba.gov
Fee: Free; registration required
Learn the essentials of federal contracting for small businesses. This event will cover the basics of navigating the federal contracting process, as well as the various certifications available to help your small business succeed in the government marketplace. Certifications include: 8(a) Business Development Program, HUBZone Certification, Woman Owned Small Business (WOSB/EDWOSB), and Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB). Don't miss this opportunity to gain valuable insights and resources to help your small business. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/federal-contracting-basics-and-certifications-for-small-businesses-tickets-1977729718828>

SBA 101: Introduction to SBA Programs Webinar
Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 9:00 am–10:00 am CDT Online
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration, Rhode Island District Office
Contact: Brian Hopkins, 401-528-4575, brian.hopkins@sba.gov
Fee: Free; registration required
This free workshop, presented by the Rhode Island

District Office, is designed to help entrepreneurs understand the various SBA programs and services available to help them as they start, expand, grow, and recover their businesses. This overview presentation covers: Introduction to the SBA; SBA Resource Partner Network—Business Training and One-on-One Counseling; Selling to the Federal Government—SBA Contracting Certification Programs; Access to Capital—Loan and Surety Bond Programs; International Trade Assistance; Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Assistance Loans. Register online for the free workshop webinar at <https://www.sba.gov/event/80665>

Federal Contracting: Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Certification Program Webinar
Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 1:00 pm–3:00 pm CDT Online
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration
Contact: Patrice Dozier, patrice.dozier@sba.gov
Fee: Free; registration required
SBA is creating a space for Woman-Owned Small Businesses, via WOSB certification! Are you a woman owner of a small business? The federal government's goal is to award at least five percent of all federal contracting dollars to woman-owned small businesses each year. Join us for training on how to register for SBA's Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) program, which helps eligible small businesses to qualify for federal contracting opportunities. The monthly sessions include an overview of the self-certification process, and a discussion of the NAICS codes that qualify as WOSB or EDWOSB. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/woman-owned-small-business-wosb-certification-program-tickets-1977995825761>

CERTIFICATION

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June 15, 2010
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