**Virginia (Ginny) Arthur chosen as Metro State’s New President**

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The search is over for the next president of Metropolitan State. Devinder Malhotra’s service as interim president, since 2014, will come to an end on July 1 when Virginia (Ginny) Arthur will be appointed as the university’s new president.

Arthur came to Metro State in 2012 when she took over the position of provost and vice-president of academic affairs, which has now transitioned into executive vice-president. Previous to that, from 2009-2012, Arthur served as associate provost for faculty affairs at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI); from 1985-2009, Arthur served at the College of St. Benedict/St. John’s University in several capacities, including professor of management, Management Department chair, and vice chair and chair of the joint faculty assembly.

When the position opened up at Metro State, Arthur was actually quite happy working at UNI. But, she considered the position with the helpful persuasion of an acquaintance. “Someone who knew Metro State pretty well encouraged me to apply, saying it seemed like such a match for what I think about higher education and what I want it to accomplish,” Arthur said. “And when I learned more about [Metro State], I agreed, this is a great match for me.” Arthur summed it up as such, “I’ve always been very interested in education as a means of changing society and as being a place that promotes social justice and equity, and it seems to me that that’s just the essence of what Metro State does.”

The journey of Arthur’s arrival in the academic world, and in the land of Minnesota, has several twists and turns. The youngest of six children, Arthur was born and raised in Ticonderoga, a small, rural town in upstate New York. In fact, she sees similarities here, “It was a rural area with a lot of lakes, so, in a way, northern Minnesota reminds me of home.” After high school, Arthur earned her bachelor’s degree in economics and business from Syracuse University, and then attended American University Washington College of Law (WCL) in Washington, D.C., from where she holds a law degree—called a juris doctor.

Upon completion of one year of law school, Arthur traveled to London, England, for a summer study program at the London School of Economics. It was here that she met Tom Haluska, who was to become a key turn in her life’s course. Arthur returned to the nation’s capital for her second year of law school, and Tom to his native Minnesota—he was born and raised in northeast Minneapolis—for his final year. The two stayed in touch and, before long, they realized their relationship was much more than just a summer romance. They were married in 1980, which was also when Arthur moved here, finishing her last year of law school at the University of Minnesota. (They have two daughters, one son, and two grandchildren for Arthur to spoil.)

Once graduated, Arthur worked a few years in various capacities, at a national accounting firm, a law firm, and as an in-house consultant for Piper Jaffray. But, something seemed amiss. “I never really felt fulfilled,” Arthur said. “So I went to a career counselor, and after two meetings she said, ‘I really think you’re an educator at heart, and you should think about that,’” she added. Taking this advice, in 1985 Arthur did a trial one-year term as a faculty member at St. Benedict/St. John’s—with the blessing of the president of Piper-Jaffray, who said she could come back if she didn’t like it. As it turned out, she did like it. “It was a no-risk thing for me,” Arthur said, “So I went, and I absolutely fell in love with teaching at the college level, and so I stayed for 24 years,” she added.

Arthur taught a variety of classes within the Management Department at St. Benedict/St. John’s, including human resource management, business law, employment law, and labor relations. Along with some colleagues, Arthur also designed a simulation class called the Organizational Leadership Program, which she helped run for about 15 years. Within this program, students set up their own company groups and ran them just like a real company, designing such things as marketing and manufacturing plans, HR systems, and various operations.

Arthur and the other teachers would create different challenges for the “management teams” of students to solve together; this exposure was very effective in preparing the students for what it was like in a real workplace. “I felt I was always destined for Metro State,” Arthur said, reflecting on this past program. “That’s such a Metro kind of thing to do, giving students these types of experiences. As an educator, I have always been interested in that idea of giving students a practical experience that allows them to apply the theories they’re learning in their classes, and that’s the essence of what we do at Metro State; so I think my philosophy matches up well.”

Arthur sees a bright future when discussing her goals for the university, “I think that Metro State is really poised to grow, and to fill the need expressed by MnSCU of increasing the number of people with baccalaureate degrees in the Twin Cities,” she said (this is one of several needs conveyed within MnSCU’s “Charting the Future Initiative”). “We also have some very good graduate programs, and more people are going on looking for graduate degrees,” Arthur added. “There’s also a lot of people who haven’t finished their degrees, and we are an institution designed to help people do that.” Arthur also sees diversity as one of Metro State’s strengths, “We are a very diverse institution, with 42% of our students coming from communities of color,” she said. “We have a group of people who are so committed to serving students who, often times, have a lot of challenges. We want to find ways to make it possible for them to get the education that they need and want. We [Metro State] are uniquely positioned to help close those achievement and opportunity gaps for people and our community,” Arthur added.

Looking at the big vision, “I want Metro State to be an institution that people say, ‘That’s a great choice for me and I want to be there,’” Arthur said. “Metro State offers really excellent educational opportunities, with strong faculty and good advisers. This is a great place for people to come and get their education, and I want more people to know that and want to come here.”