



## Remembering

Frank Samuel DiPietro  
(1926-2013)



# Entrepreneur, Leader, Educator

*By Lisa Murray, Editor*

**F**rank Samuel DiPietro, Ed.D., was the founder, first president, and trustee emeritus of the beloved institution we now call Franklin Pierce University. When Dr. DiPietro passed away on Dec. 6, 2013, he left behind thousands of students, faculty, staff, and community members touched by his vision to found Franklin Pierce College back in 1962.

### The Beginning

Dr. DiPietro was born in Fitchburg, Mass. He graduated from Fitchburg High School and enlisted in the U.S. Navy, serving on the USS Hughes in the World War II Pacific Forces Operations, for which he received several campaign medals. Following his time in the U.S. Navy, Dr. DiPietro began his life in higher education, earning the following degrees:

- Associate Degree in Business Administration, Sampson College
- Bachelor of Science Degree, Syracuse University
- Master of Arts Degree, Columbia University
- Doctor of Education Degree, Boston University
- Doctor of Humane Letters (Honorary), Schiller International University
- Doctor of Law (Honorary), Franklin Pierce University

### The Dream

Dr. DiPietro became the president of Stevens Business College before obtaining a charter from the State of New Hampshire to embark on his dream to open a small, liberal arts college. He founded the private institution with four partners, each contributing \$10,000 to start the endeavor. Thus Franklin Pierce College was born, named after the 14<sup>th</sup> president of the United States who was a native of New Hampshire. Dr. DiPietro served as president of Franklin Pierce from 1962 until 1975, and chancellor from 1975 through 1980.

Under Dr. DiPietro's leadership, Franklin Pierce College became an accredited liberal arts college; Franklin Pierce Law Center was also established, which was subsequently sold to UNH. Dr. DiPietro's unflagging determination to give young people better access to a college education, his business sense

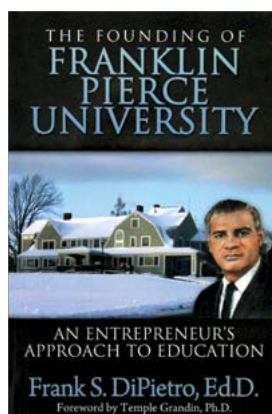
and capabilities in starting a higher education entrepreneurial venture, and his ability to enable others to embrace his vision and contribute to it with their own energy, expertise, and funds gave Franklin Pierce the foundation it needed to grow and prosper.

President James Birge remarked, "The entire Franklin Pierce University community owes a debt of gratitude for the life of Dr. DiPietro, who was dedicated to providing educational opportunities for others, and to the vision of providing a close mentoring relationship between those who learn and those who teach. His idea to launch a college in the 1960s was not only visionary, but it also has stood the test of time. While other colleges that were chartered in the 1960s have closed, Franklin Pierce University remains a vibrant institution of learning that has educated more than 20,000 students. I am grateful for Frank's vision, for his leadership, and for his support of Franklin Pierce over the years."

## The Legacy

Lloyd Astmann, former chairman of the Board of Trustees at Franklin Pierce and graduate of the class of '69, reflected on what Dr. DiPietro meant to him: "To the pioneer students, he was a savior. He had a concept, an understanding that not everyone was ready for college at age 18. There were people who had the ability to succeed in college and beyond college, but who hadn't yet demonstrated that. Many of us had limited options at the time, and Dr. DiPietro gave us an opportunity to make something of ourselves – and we did. I am deeply indebted to him for that."

In Dr. DiPietro's book, *The Founding of Franklin Pierce University; An Entrepreneur's Approach to Education*, he chronicles the challenges, growing pains, and ultimate triumphs of starting an institute of higher education.



"I founded Franklin Pierce College in 1962, on the assumption that a liberal arts college that emphasized the process of learning how to learn would meet the educational needs of the times. ... I envisioned that Franklin Pierce College would provide a relevant *living* experience for those students who wanted to learn how to learn and learn how to live."

Michael Fallon, chairman of the University's Board of Trustees, said, "Franklin Pierce University is a shining testament to the vision of Frank DiPietro and to his commitment to men and women with a desire to learn. The Board of Trustees and generations of students are indebted to him for his commitment."

Dr. DiPietro's mission in life was to help people live meaningful lives; education was the means he saw of furthering that goal. He was successful in meeting his goal, and for that and so much more, we are all very grateful.



Top: Dr. DiPietro and Gov. Walter Peterson.  
Bottom: Dr. DiPietro and wife Theresa at Franklin Pierce's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.



*Gifts may be made in honor of Dr. DiPietro by making a donation to:*

**THE PIERCE FUND IN MEMORY OF DR. FRANK DIPETRO**