

Mitchell M. Zais, Ph.D.

**Brigadier General, U.S. Army (ret.)
President, American Philatelic Society**

Dr. Mitchell M. "Mick" Zais took the oath of office as South Carolina State Superintendent of Education on January 12, 2011. Following a four-year term, he chose not to run for reelection. Before winning public election as the seventeenth State Superintendent of Education, he served as president of Newberry College for ten years. A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, he served 31 years on active duty in the United States Army, retiring as a Brigadier General.

As State Superintendent, Dr. Zais oversaw the operation of and advocated policy for 82 school districts, 1250 schools, 51,000 teachers, 720,000 students and a \$4.0 billion annual budget.

During Dr. Zais' four years in office, on-time high school graduation rates increased every year, from 72 percent to an all-time high of 80 percent. On the state report card, the number of school districts rated "excellent" increased from 7 percent to 51 percent, while the number rated "at risk," the lowest rating fell from 7 percent to 3.7 percent. A strong advocate for school choice, during his tenure the number of public charter schools grew from 37 to 66, enrollment in these schools expanded from 11,000 to 28,000, and per pupil funding for charter school students more than doubled, from \$2,734 to \$5,720. He also increased on-line course offerings from 64 to 95, with enrollment increasing from 10,000 to 23,000. Finally, he developed and instituted an accountability system whereby every school and district in the state received a letter grade of A through F, based on measures of student growth and student learning outcomes.

As State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Zais served on the Boards of Trustees for the University of South Carolina, Winthrop University and The Citadel. For the past 12 years, he has represented South Carolina on the Southern Regional Education Board.

During Dr. Zais' tenure as president of Newberry College, enrollment nearly doubled, the endowment more than doubled, facilities were constructed and renovated, academic programs were added, and athletic teams competed for NCAA regional and national titles. For the last three years of his administration, the prestigious "U.S. News and World Report" named Newberry College as one of America's best colleges.

While at Newberry, Dr. Zais served as chair of the presidents' councils of both the South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities and the South Atlantic Athletic Conference. He was also a member of the board of directors for the Foundation for Independent Higher Education, the Lutheran Education Conference of North America, the South Carolina Tuition Grants Commission, the Newberry Opera House Foundation and the Southeastern Region of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. Dr. Zais represented the state's 20 private colleges and universities as commissioner on the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

Dr. Mitchell (Mick) M. Zais earned an engineering degree from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point; a Master of Arts degree in military history from the School for Advanced Military Studies at Leavenworth, Kansas; and Master of Science and Ph.D. degrees in social psychology and organizational behavior from the University of Washington. He is also a graduate of the National Defense University, Washington, D.C., where he was a post-doctoral research fellow in national security affairs.

Dr. Zais has written and published extensively in the fields of organizational behavior, curriculum design, stress, military history and doctrine, leadership and management, and military strategy, in such professional journals as the "Journal of Applied Psychology," "Armed Forces Journal International," "Military Review," "Parameters," etc. His opinion-editorial pieces have appeared in newspapers across the country.



Before becoming Newberry College's 20th president, Dr. Zais served his country for 31 years as an officer in United States Army, attaining the rank of brigadier general. As an assistant professor at West Point, he taught management consulting, organizational behavior, and leadership. He has also served as an internal management consultant to the Army.

A paratrooper and ranger, Dr. Zais served in a wide variety of infantry units, in Vietnam, the United States and Korea. He commanded two rifle companies, an infantry battalion, a light infantry brigade, and served as deputy commanding general, Fort Riley, Kansas. His staff experience is primarily in military plans and operations, having worked as chief of operations, plans, and training for an infantry battalion and division; war plans officer for a corps; and Chief of War Plans for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Dr. Zais was a White House aide and served in Panama as executive assistant to the four-star commander of all U.S. forces in Central and South America. In Kuwait, he was commanding general of U.S. and Allied forces. He also served as commanding general of Operation Provide Refuge, the task force that cared for the 4,000 Kosovo refugees who entered the United States. His final assignment was as Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army Reserve Command, the headquarters that administered the 184,000 part-time Reservists, 9,000 civilian employees and 11,000 full-time military members of the Army Reserve.

Dr. Zais' military awards and decorations include the Department of Defense and the Army Distinguished Service Medals, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, the Ranger, Airborne, and Combat Infantryman's Badges, and the South Carolina Meritorious Service Medal.

Dr. Zais wife, the former Susan Fincher, a graduate of the University of South Carolina, is from Columbia. They are the parents of two married adult children. Son Bradley, who served as an infantry soldier in Iraq, has two daughters. Daughter Ashley, the former Miss South Carolina USA, has two sons. All four grandchildren are aged five or younger. The Zaises are members of Eastminster Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC.