

Judson Awards Honorary Doctorate to District Superintendent Tony Sanders

(ELGIN, IL – April 28, 2020) Judson University’s Board of Trustees has awarded an honorary doctorate of Humane Letters to School District U-46 Superintendent Tony Sanders. The award recognizes Superintendent Sanders dedication and commitment to improving educational opportunities and outcomes for all students.

Such awards are typically presented during the Judson University’s Spring Commencement but that has been postponed until Sept. 19 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The university will recognize Supt. Sanders during a Facebook Live interview with Judson President Dr. Gene Crume and Supt. Sanders.

The Facebook Live interview, to be broadcast via the Judson Facebook page at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, April 28, is part of the university’s week-long social media activities that run through the first week of May.

Superintendent Tony Sanders runs the day-to-day operations of School District U-46, a place he has called home since 2007. Mr. Sanders oversees the implementation of all board and district policies and procedures as well as alignment of resources to all districtwide initiatives and improvement plans for the state’s second-largest school district. He works in close collaboration with an administrative staff that manages a balanced district budget of over \$550 million, and he has lobbied relentlessly in Springfield for more equitable state education funding, successfully helping develop a more equitable state education funding formula that was signed into law in 2017.



Superintendent Sanders works with staff and community members to set specific measurable goals for the district’s Strategic Plan, which calls for ensuring all students gain the experiences they need to graduate from School District U-46 prepared to compete in a global society. He’s proud of the district’s many achievements, from high schools ranked among the best in the

country, to a thriving dual-language program and expanding early childhood educational opportunities.

Superintendent Sanders serves as the Past Chair of the Large Countywide and Suburban Consortium, a network of some of the nation's most successful district leaders. Under Superintendent Sanders' tenure as CEO, U-46 has rolled out full-day kindergarten for all students and implemented a play-based kindergarten program the following year, continued the expansion of the district's dual language program to high school; and created a new alternative high school, the DREAM Academy, to better serve students with a trauma-sensitive approach; and has provided alternative placements in lieu of any expulsions beginning in 2014. Also during his tenure, U-46 has eliminated a structural deficit and provided a reserve above 25 percent of the \$580 million operating budget.

"I have had the distinct pleasure of working with Tony in many ways within the Elgin community. I have always appreciated his leadership, not only in field of education but in his work throughout the community," said Judson President Gene Crume. "We are pleased to recognize the depth of his life and professional experiences in shaping the lives of thousands of students. This is also Judson's mission of shaping lives that shape the world."

Prior to becoming Superintendent, Mr. Sanders served as the Chief of Staff for former Superintendent Dr. José M. Torres. He joined the district as Chief Communications Officer after holding the same title in St. Louis Public Schools. Mr. Sanders brings two decades of leadership experience to his current post, having served as Acting Director for Governmental Relations and Public Information for the Illinois State Board of Education and other top posts at the Department of Professional Regulation and the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Mr. Sanders earned his Master of Business Administration degree from New York Institute of Technology – Ellis College, and his undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois at Springfield. He is currently perusing his doctorate degree from Aurora University.

Mr. Sanders and his wife, Schelli, live in Elgin. Their children, Jack and Lexie, both graduated from U-46 and have attended Judson University at different

times. Lexie came to Judson as a freshman this spring to study Music Performance.

Judson University is a fully accredited, private Christian institution representing the Church at work in higher education. Nestled along the beautiful Fox River in Elgin, Ill., just 36 miles northwest of Chicago, Judson is home to more than 1,250 students from 36 states and 30 countries. Judson offers degrees in more than 65 different majors and minors for traditional, graduate and adult students and ranks consistently among the Best Regional Universities in the Midwest by U.S. News & World Report. Judson has also been recognized as a “Christian College of Distinction.” With an academically challenging environment and encouraging spiritual community, Judson shapes lives that shape the world.

###