



Sandra S. Harper, Ph.D.

10th President | McMurry University
Presidential Term: 2013–2025



Dr. Sandra S. Harper, a native of Dallas, Texas, has served as the president of McMurry University since 2013. Prior to her McMurry appointment, Harper served as the president of Our Lady of the Lake College in Baton Rouge, Louisiana from 2006–2013 and as the provost and vice president for academic affairs and professor of communication at Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi from 1998–2006. Harper’s other administrative posts included serving as the vice president for academic affairs at Oklahoma City University and as the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at McMurry University. Harper served as a faculty member in the communication and theatre department at McMurry University from 1985–1995.

Harper received her B.S. degree from Texas Tech University and her M.S. and Ph.D. from the University of North Texas. Harper also completed the Harvard Management Development Program and the Governor’s Executive Development Program at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas.

In 2011, Harper was named a Distinguished Alumna by the Texas Tech University College of Education. Harper has received the Management Excellence Award from the Society for the Advancement of Management, the Y Women in Careers Award from the Corpus Christi YWCA, the Outstanding Faculty Award and the Outstanding Administrator Award from McMurry University, the AAUW–Abilene Branch Women of Outstanding Achievement, the Women of Power and Purpose Award from the Regional Victim Crisis Center, and the 2020 SACSCOC Carol A. Luthman Meritorious Service Award.

Harper is the former board chair of the Independent Colleges and Universities of Texas (ICUT) and the Educational and Institutional Insurance Administrators, Inc. (EIIA) board, and serves on the boards of the North American Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges and Universities, the Abilene Chamber of Commerce, the Abilene Industrial Foundation and is the Vice-President of the Board of Directors of the Abilene Convention Center Hotel Development Corporation. Harper has been on the United Methodist University Senate since 2017.

She is married to Dave Harper. The couple has two adult sons, two daughters-in-law, and six grandchildren. They plan to split time between Abilene and northeast Texas after Harper steps away from the McMurry presidency.