



ACICS Executive Directors: A History of Leaders

Versatile Accreditation Leader Led ACICS Through Change

Stephen D. Parker
Executive Director
1992-2000

Dr. Stephen Parker could never be accused of keeping his opinions to himself. A passionate believer in private career schools, he was recognized as an ACICS Commissioner, an evaluator, a staff member and a school administrator before he was named the agency's Executive Director in 1992. He held this position until 2000.

As Executive Director, Dr. Parker was immediately faced with implementing the new requirements from the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. The new legislation included some of the most sweeping changes seen in the sector, including the separation of the accrediting activities from those of its trade association. He also led ACICS through negotiated rulemaking following Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, the rise and fall of State Postsecondary Review Entities (SPREs), the implementation of a re-recognition petition to the U.S. Department of Education, and a continued quest for parity with regional accrediting agencies.

As a Commissioner, Dr. Parker was known for his tenacious file review and a willingness to challenge the status quo, constantly challenging his colleagues to make tough decisions. Both before and after his tenure with ACICS, he served as a skilled administrator of several colleges and institutions nationwide.

According to those who knew him well, Dr. Parker was a professional who always approached his work with a combination of knowledge, passion, and commitment. He had an amazing ability to attract the right people to accomplish the very best and have a great time doing it, whether staff or volunteers. The fact that many of his former ACICS staff members remain involved in the industry nearly 25 years later is a testimony to Dr. Parker's influence on others. He received the ACICS Distinguished Service Award shortly before his death in 2006 at the age of 59.