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NEWS RELEASE

COMMUNITY LEADERS LAUNCH \$1 MILLION DRIVE, ANNOUNCE TRIBUTE DINNER PART OF DAYTON'S THANK-YOU GIFT TO BROTHER RAY FITZ

DAYTON, Ohio — The Dayton community will celebrate the leadership of outgoing University of Dayton President Brother Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., and launch a highly visible center that will serve as a legacy of Fitz's presidency at a community-wide tribute dinner in the spring, community leaders announced today.

The "Celebration of Leadership in Community" dinner will be held at the Dayton Convention Center on Wednesday, April 24. As a thank-you gift to Fitz from the Dayton community, a 15-person steering committee headed by Brad Tillson, publisher of the *Dayton Daily News*, is raising \$1 million from local corporations, foundations and individuals toward a \$5 million endowment to permanently fund UD's new Center for Leadership in Community and name it after Fitz. Ronald Heifetz, director of Harvard University's Leadership Education Project and author of *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, will give the keynote speech.

"I don't know anyone in my 30 years here who has provided more moral leadership in this community than Brother Ray," said Tillson, whose committee has raised nearly \$300,000. To date, half of the \$5 million endowment has been committed. "Brother Ray tends to lead first by example, then with quiet strength. He has been at the table dealing with this community's toughest issues — race relations, the protection of children and families, health and human services issues, economic development issues. There's hardly an area where he's not been involved."

Ohio Senate President Richard Finan, chair of UD's board of trustees and a member of the steering committee, said the event is not a farewell dinner. "This is as much for the community as it is for Brother Ray. The community deserves the opportunity to give a proper thank-you. It's a thank-you not just for service, but for service that has gone above and beyond the call of duty, in my opinion. Under Brother Ray's leadership, we've blossomed, we've expanded, we've nurtured our roots. He will be turning over the reins of an institution that's in outstanding condition, financially, academically and spiritually."

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When Fitz steps down as president on June 30, 2002, after a record 23-year stint, he won't be leaving the University of Dayton — a part of his life for more than four decades, beginning as an engineering student in 1960.

"I plan to take a six-month sabbatical focusing on spiritual and intellectual renewal. It will be a time to listen to a new calling from the Lord," said Fitz, the longest-serving president in UD's 151-year history.

He will then join the faculty in UD's College of Arts and Sciences and, as a member of the Center for Leadership in Community, he will "teach and write in the fields of leadership and community and continue to work for families and children in the Dayton community."

Tillson called the center a fitting mark of Fitz's leadership. "UD is involved in the community around it and intends to increase the involvement, institutionalize it and teach it to generations of students through the Center for Leadership in Community," he said.

Fitz currently serves on the executive committee and school readiness committee of Montgomery County's Family and Children First Council, which is working to create a seamless human services system. His strong interest in the health of the community extends to the classroom, where he team-teaches a "Leadership in Building Communities" seminar. He also chairs the Dayton Public Schools Community Advisory Council and sits on a community committee charged with hiring a new police chief for Dayton. He recently co-chaired the student assessments and intervention strategy committee on the Governor's Commission for Student Success.

Under Fitz's leadership, the University of Dayton has evolved from a local and regional university to one with international reach and growing prestige. This fall's entering class has the highest college-entrance test scores in UD's history, and UD has offered a wait list for first-year enrollment for three straight years. Fitz's tenure will end as UD caps off its \$150 million image- and fund-raising "Call to Lead" campaign — the largest ever undertaken in the Dayton region.

The April tribute is designed to draw a cross section of the community. "With major sponsorships from corporations and individuals, we're going to make sure the dinner is accessible to anyone who's been touched by Brother Ray — from corporate leaders to students, from neighborhood groups to church leaders," Tillson said.

The Celebration of Leadership in Community Steering Committee includes: Brad Tillson, chair; John W. Berry Jr.; Thomas Breitenbach; Fran Evans; Dick Ferguson; Richard Finan; Jane Haley; Allen Hill; Susan Kettering; Valerie Lemmie; John Moore; Vicki Pegg; Burnell Roberts; Stuart Rose; Dan Sadlier; and Joanie Swedlund.

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