



## **Dr. José F. Méndez**

President, Ana G. Méndez University System

Dr. José F. Méndez has been President of the Ana G. Méndez University System (AGMUS) for the past thirty six years. He has dedicated himself to creating educational opportunities for thousands of young men and women, and establishing a new standard of excellence in different areas of the higher education field.

Since he became president in 1974, AGMUS has grown to become a multi-university system, which includes Universidad del Turabo (1972), Universidad Metropolitana (1980) and Universidad del Este (formerly called Puerto Rico Junior College, 1992). Also, in 1985, under Dr. Méndez' stewardship, AGMUS founded Channel 40 (today, Sistema TV), Puerto Rico's first privately operated television station affiliated to PBS. Today, AGMUS serves more than 42,000 students in its three main campuses and 14 off-campus university centers in Puerto Rico and three campuses in Florida (Orlando, Tampa and Miramar in South Florida). AGMUS offers a wide array of Professional Certificates, Associate, Bachelor, Master and Doctoral degrees.

Under the leadership of Dr. José F. Méndez, AGMUS has established collaborative efforts with other universities, several national laboratories and many federal agencies. In 1983 he signed the first Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between a Hispanic institution (AGMUS), a historically black college (Jackson State University) and a National Laboratory (Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory), creating the Science Consortium. This agreement bridged a gap between groups of minority students and faculties, and became emblematic of the courage and vision of Dr. Méndez and his work.

In 1987, President Méndez directed the effort to create a Science and Technology Alliance, involving three other National laboratories and two other minority institutions together with AGMUS, including Los Alamos, Oak Ridge and Sandia National Laboratories, New Mexico Highlands University and North Carolina A & T State University. His visionary leadership led to the creation and signing of another MOU to create the Hispanic Educational Satellite System (HESS), to share educational resources with other colleges and universities on the U.S. mainland, Mexico, and other Latin American countries. He has also recently signed cooperative agreements with different institutions in the mainland, the Caribbean, South America and Europe, such as MIT, Florida State University, Tech de Monterrey, Universidad de Chile, Universidad del Salvador, Argentina, Universidad de León and Universidad de Compostela, Spain, among others.

He has been President of the Board of Directors of the Hispanic Educational Telecommunication System (HETS), and President of the Private Colleges and Universities



Association of Puerto Rico (ACUP, by its Spanish acronym), member of different Boards of Directors of organizations such as the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU); the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), among others. Dr. Méndez has participated as member of different governmental committees: member of the Board of Trustees of the Educational Foundation; member of the Special Commission for the Convenience of a Unicameral Legislature; member of the Elementary and Higher Education Improvement Plan, and member of the Council for the Development of the Public Policy of Science and Technology.

His life has been dedicated to the education and improvement of the quality of life of our people. For example, Dr. Méndez led the development of various community impact projects such as the Public Policy Institute (PPI), an AGMUS' organization whose objective is to promote the analysis and in-depth discussion of public policy issues, through forums, research, educational series and other activities. Likewise, it has gained support from business and government for the establishment of regional economic development initiatives comprising 48 municipalities of the Island (INTECO, INTENOR, INTENE, DISUR); the establishment of the Center of Excellence for High Technology (CETA), in conjunction with the municipality of Barceloneta, Merck and other pharmaceutical industries in the north of the island, among others.

For his years of excellent service, Dr. Méndez has received several recognitions. Among others, the Charles R. Drew Award of the National Red Cross, being the first Puerto Rican to obtain this award; the Distinguished Service Award of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges; the Franklin Covey Organizational Greatness Award; Citizen of the Year by the Puerto Rico Manufacturing Association, Man of the Year, by Caribbean Business (a weekly publication), Distinguished Educator by Phi Delta Kappa, appointed to the Hall of Fame of the Sales and Marketing Executives Association of San Juan, Puerto Rico; the Zenith Award from the Puerto Rico Chamber of Commerce; the Merit Recognition of the San Juan Star newspaper and the Innovation Award by the Conglomerate of the Construction Industry of Puerto Rico. He received the Life Achievement Award from Caribbean Business, and two honorary degrees from the Universidad Pedro Henríquez Ureña (Dominican Republic) and Regis University of Colorado.

During his years as President of the AGMUS, Dr. Méndez has changed the lives of many thousands of young minority students and improved the future for us all. The devotion of Dr. Méndez has always been reaching a higher level of quality and excellence. Facing the challenge of a personalized education, strongly based on moral values, its institutions not only aspired to prepare professionals with a higher commitment to excellence, but also to form men and women capable of putting their knowledge to the service of the community.