Don Randel Elected New President of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

New York, NY- Don Michael Randel has been chosen by the Board of Trustees to serve as the President of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, effective July 1, 2006. Randel has served as President of the University of Chicago since 2000. The election of Randel is the result of an extensive search carried out by the Trustees over the last year.

Randel will succeed William G. Bowen, who has served as President since 1988. Bowen will serve a final year before continuing his research and writing, as well as providing support to Ithaka Harbors, Inc., a non-profit organization chaired by Bowen whose mission is to accelerate the productive uses of information technologies for the benefit of higher education around the world.

“The Mellon Foundation is unique among the major foundations in its commitment to the humanities and the arts and in bringing new technologies to their support,” Randel said. “These are matters to which I have devoted all of my professional life, and it is therefore extraordinarily exciting to be offered the opportunity to aid in continuing the Foundation’s great tradition. I look forward to furthering the Foundation’s collaborations with grantee institutions to strengthen them within all of the Foundation’s areas of focus both in this country and abroad.”

Anne M. Tatlock, Chairman of the Mellon Board and Chairman and CEO of Fiduciary Trust Company International, said she spoke for all Board members in expressing their great pleasure that Randel had agreed to head the foundation. “Under Don’s leadership we are confident that Mellon will continue to provide strong support for some of our nation’s most important institutions and for our unique international programs. His deep
knowledge of the arts and the humanities is a marvelous fit for the Foundation as is his experience leading one of the country’s great research universities.”

Don Randel is a musicologist who attended Princeton University, where he received bachelor’s, master’s, and doctorate degrees in music. His scholarly specialty is the music of the Middle Ages and Renaissance in Spain and France. As a music historian, Randel is widely published, particularly on medieval liturgical chant, and he has also written on such varied topics as Arabic music theory, Latin American popular music, and 15th century French music and poetry.

In 1968, Randel joined the Cornell University faculty in the department of music. He served for 32 years as a member of Cornell’s faculty, where he was also department chair, vice-provost, and associate dean and then dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. He became provost of Cornell University in 1995.

In July 2000 Randel assumed the position of President of the University of Chicago. There he has led efforts to strengthen the humanities and the arts on campus as well as a broad range of interactions with the city of Chicago and a further strengthening of the University’s programs in the physical and biomedical sciences and its relationship with Argonne National Laboratory. He has also led an ongoing campaign for $2 billion, the largest in the University’s history.


“I am delighted that Don Randel has accepted this position,” said Bowen. “He is the ideal choice to lead the Foundation’s efforts in its core areas of activity, and I am confident that he and the staff will work very well together. I look forward to handing my baton to such a strong runner.”

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which is headquartered in New York City, makes grants principally in five core program areas: higher education and scholarship, libraries and scholarly communications, conservation and the environment, museums and art conservation, and performing arts. Additionally, Mellon has been instrumental in the development of ARTstor, JSTOR, and Ithaka, non-profit organizations engaged in various activities to further the use of information technology to benefit higher education around the world.

The Foundation was established in 1969 as a result of the consolidation of the Old Dominion Foundation and The Avalon Foundation, founded respectively by Andrew Mellon’s son, Paul Mellon, in 1941, and daughter, Ailsa Mellon Bruce, in 1940. It has $4.5 billion in assets and provided $186 million in grants in 2004.