

January 16, 2026

The Honorable Glenn Youngkin
Office of the Governor
1111 E. Broad Street, 3rd Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor Youngkin:

I am a lifelong Virginian. I grew up in Charlottesville, which is to say, I grew up with the University of Virginia close to my heart. It was an honor when you appointed me to the Board of Visitors. I regret that Governor-Elect Spanberger does not intend to allow me to finish my term. My decision to resign is consistent with what has always guided me: the welfare of this great University.

In 2009, my father J. Harvie Wilkinson III gave the commencement address at Final Exercises. As he said then: "It's possible to love an institution as one loves individuals. The word love should apply to both." Loving a place means taking responsibility for it. Protecting it. Leaving it better than you found it.

I love the University of Virginia and am leaving it better than I found it. The University has faced several critical challenges during the past 18 months. At every turn, the Board was guided by the best interests of the University. We stabilized the leadership crisis in the health system, remediated three years of material weakness in the financial statements that threatened the financial foundation of not only the University but the entire Commonwealth, and established an executive-compensation committee to ensure responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources and pay equity among executives. We emphasized affordability by insisting that in-state tuition remain flat this year. The agreement with the Department of Justice does not entail any loss of funding, intrusive external monitors, or restrictions on classrooms or curricula. It is the envy of schools across the country. We selected Scott Beardsley as the 10th President of the University through an inclusive, transparent, and rigorous search process. He is the right person to lead the University at this important time.

While there have been partisan attempts to amplify voices of discontent in the media, the tone across Grounds is much different. Researchers, who appreciate what their peers are facing at sister schools, have expressed gratitude that there has not been more disruption to their funding and careers. Doctors at the health system appreciate the culture of compliance and emphasis on patient welfare under new leadership. Administrators recognize the sustained effort and support from the Audit Committee that went into clearing the material weakness in the financial statements and maintaining the University's AAA credit rating. People from all corners of the community have applauded President Beardsley's record, intellect, and strategic vision.

I am proud of what we've done and how we've done it. I would love to continue serving our cherished institution, but in deference to the Governor-Elect's request, I hereby resign. My only wish is that the differences of the present moment will not impair the brightness of this great University's future and that leadership of the University will be able to build constructively on our accomplishments.

Thank you, Governor Youngkin, for this extraordinary opportunity. I will be forever grateful.

Sincerely,

Porter Wilkinson