

Clayton 'Pete' McNeill, Coppin administrator

By BY FREDERICK N. RASMUSSEN and THE BALTIMORE SUN
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Clayton "Pete" McNeill, a former executive at Coppin State University who during his more than three-decade career oversaw a \$325 million campus expansion at the Baltimore school, died Monday of congestive heart failure at Sinai Hospital.

The Catonsville resident was 66.

"I admired him very much. He was an excellent administrator and a very loyal employee," said Calvin Burnett, who was president of the university from 1970 until retiring in 2003. "He came through here as a student and came back to join our administrative staff. He was just a fine, outstanding individual."

The son of Clayton Loydell McNeill and Amanda McNeill, who were silk and wool pressers, Clayton McNeill was born in Baltimore and raised in Cherry Hill.

Dr. McNeill was a 1965 graduate of Southern High School, where he had been quarterback on the football team. He graduated in 1969 from what was then Coppin State College with a bachelor's degree in mathematics.

An outstanding athlete during his college days at Coppin, Dr. McNeill played basketball and baseball and participated in track and field. He was a guard/forward on Coppin's first conference championship team, which won the 1968 Potomac Intercollegiate Conference Tournament Championship.

After graduating from Coppin, Dr. McNeill taught math for three years at Cherry Hill Junior High School before returning to his alma mater in 1972 as co-director of the Coppin Urban Resource Exchange. A year later, he was named director of student activities.

During that time, he served as director of auxiliary services while studying at night to earn a master's degree in education, which he received in 1975 from Coppin.

"He always had a great outlook and concern for the growth of students. After all, he had a vested interest in the institution because he was an alumnus," said Earl H. Jenkins, who worked closely with Dr. McNeill and retired from Coppin as vice president of student life in 2007.

"He absolutely had an impact on student life at Coppin," he said.

In 1986, Dr. McNeill was named associate dean. Later that year, he was promoted to vice president for student life, where his wide-ranging responsibilities included orientation, counseling, career planning and placement, employment, housing, publications and recreation programs. During this time, Dr. McNeill oversaw the building of the first residence halls at the traditionally commuter school. He was also known for spending countless hours looking for financial help to keep students in school. On

weekends, Dr. McNeill traveled to Philadelphia, where he earned his doctorate in education in 1986 from Temple University.

In addition to serving as vice president for student life, he was appointed to the position of interim director of athletics in 1992, a job he held for 12 years. Dr. McNeill was promoted again in 2004 to executive vice president of administration and finance, responsible for the university's budget. During this time, he oversaw a \$325 million expansion of the college's campus, which included a physical education complex, science and technology building, and health and human services building.

"He was very easy to work with, and those who reported to Pete idolized him," said Dr. Burnett. "He always gave people in his division a lot of flexibility and support."

"He was a very talkative and animated type who always exuded a quiet fire," recalled Mr. Jenkins. "He was a rock for so many people. He was the go-to person if you had a problem or a celebration." Dr. McNeill retired from Coppin in 2006. At the time, he and his wife, the former Pamela Carpenter, who graduated from Coppin in 1970, established and endowed scholarships in the Coppin State University Development Foundation.

He was a member of the Epsilon Nu Sigma chapter of Phi Beta Sigma fraternity and the Prince Hall Masons.

Dr. McNeill was a golfer and Ravens fan. He also enjoyed going to the movies and watching classic Hollywood films.

He was a communicant of St. Gabriel Roman Catholic Church, 6950 Dogwood Road, Woodlawn, where a Mass of Christian burial will be offered at 1 p.m. Saturday.

In addition to his wife of 38 years, Dr. McNeill is survived by two sons, Anthony T. Carpenter of Randallstown and Cory C. McNeill of Charlottesville, Va.; a brother, Tyrone McNeill of Woodlawn; two sisters, Patricia Watts of Windsor Mill and Mamie McDaniels of Darlington, S.C.; and five grandchildren.

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