

## **Former Nashville Mayor Bill Purcell Named Director of Harvard's Institute of Politics**

CAMBRIDGE, MA – Bill Purcell, the former mayor of Nashville, Tennessee, has been named director of Harvard's Institute of Politics (IOP) at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. Purcell will assume the post on September 1.

Purcell has spent more than 30 years in public service, law and higher education. During his eight-year tenure as mayor of Nashville (1999-2007) the city saw unprecedented economic expansion, an increase in Metro school funding of more than 50 percent, and the development of more than 26,000 affordable housing units. His accomplishments as a civic leader earned him "Public Official of the Year" honors in 2006 by *Governing Magazine*. Purcell was an IOP Fellow in the fall of 2007.

Purcell has served as founding dean of the College of Public Service and Urban Affairs at Tennessee State University since January 2008 and was founder and director of the Child and Family Policy Center at Vanderbilt University (1996-99). He served as a legislator in the State of Tennessee House of Representatives (1986-96) and as Majority Leader (1990-96). Previously, Purcell worked as a senior assistant public defender in the Nashville Metro Public Defender's Office (1981-85). He earned his bachelor's degree at Hamilton College and his law degree at Vanderbilt University School of Law.

"Bill Purcell is a highly distinguished public servant with an extensive background in economic development, educational reform, and community revitalization," said David T. Ellwood, Dean of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. "His broad range of expertise and the unique perspectives he brings to the IOP will be a tremendous asset to the Institute and the Kennedy School in the years ahead."

U.S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA), an IOP Senior Advisory Committee Member, said: "Mayor Purcell has had an impressive career in politics and government and I'm delighted he'll lead the Institute of Politics. He knows that young people are the future and is deeply committed to enabling them to meet the nation's challenges through public service."

"Bill Purcell will be a wonderful leader for the IOP," said IOP Senior Advisory Committee Member Caroline Kennedy, who served on the Search Committee. "His extensive experience in elective office, his bipartisan governing style, and his commitment to public service as a way of life will inspire a new generation of students."

“I am greatly honored by this appointment to lead the Institute of Politics, a truly unique and irresistible professional and personal opportunity,” said Bill Purcell. “The Institute’s central undergraduate mission is critical to the future of public service in this country, and its program reach is both local and global. I am looking forward to again working with the outstanding students and staff of the Institute and the extraordinary colleagues at the Harvard Kennedy School.”

Tennessee State University President Melvin N. Johnson said: “Bill Purcell came to Tennessee State University (TSU) at a very pivotal time in its academic history. As the founding dean of the College of Public Service and Urban Affairs (CPSUA), he has proven to be a strategic thinker, visionary leader and astute academician.

“During his tenure at TSU, he created a rigorous CPSUA program, focusing on improving the college’s academic environment, and attracting and retaining the best and brightest students from throughout the nation.

“I am elated to have had the opportunity to collaborate with Bill on numerous academic initiatives. Without a doubt, he is one of our nation’s most accomplished and visionary leaders. I wish to thank him for his commitment to Tennessee State University and the state of Tennessee. We look forward to observing his future success at Harvard’s Institute of Politics.”

Purcell will succeed former U.S. Congressman James A. Leach (R-IA), who graciously stepped in to serve as IOP director for the 2007-08 academic year. “We are grateful for Congressman Leach’s leadership and his dedicated service to the Kennedy School,” said Ellwood. “His commitment, enthusiasm and steady hand helped guide the IOP during a very exciting year.” Leach will return to his faculty appointment at Princeton University, where he is the John L. Weinberg Visiting Professor of Public and International Affairs at the Woodrow Wilson School.

*Harvard University’s Institute of Politics (IOP), located at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, was established in 1966 as a memorial to President Kennedy. The IOP’s mission is to unite and engage students, particularly undergraduates, with academics, politicians, activists, and policymakers on a non-partisan basis and to stimulate and nurture their interest in public service and leadership. The Institute strives to promote greater understanding and cooperation between the academic world and the world of politics and public affairs. More information is available online at: [www.iop.harvard.edu](http://www.iop.harvard.edu).*

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