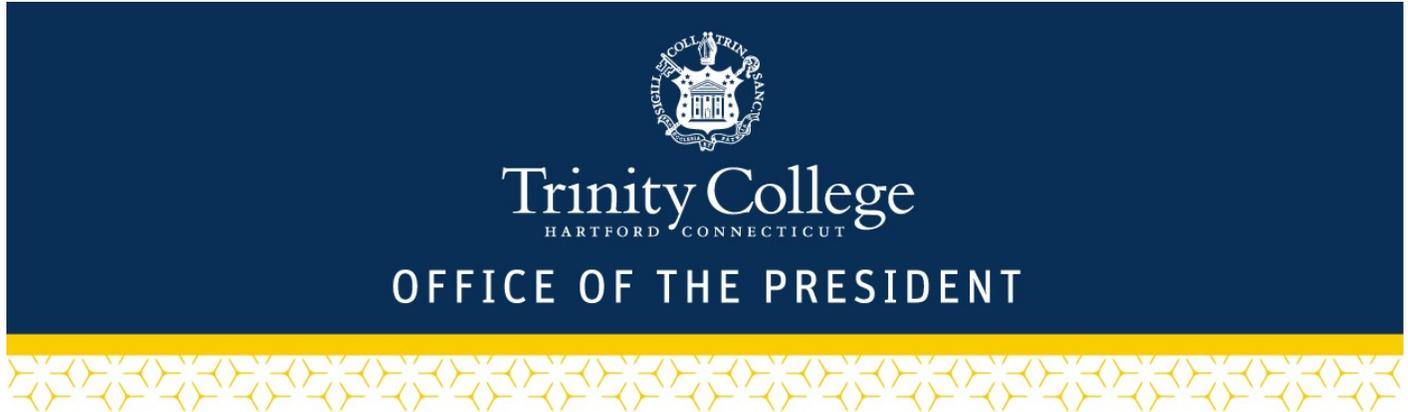


## The Passing of Former Trinity President James Fairfield English Jr.

President Joanne Berger-Sweeney <President@trincoll.edu>

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To: President Joanne Berger-Sweeney <President@trincoll.edu>



June 4, 2020

Dear Members of the Trinity College Community,

I write today to share the sad news that James Fairfield English Jr., who served as Trinity's 16th president, died on June 2 at his home in Noank, Connecticut, at the age of 93.

President English began his esteemed career at Trinity in 1977 as vice president for finance and planning. He brought with him the enormous experience that he gained during 26 years with Connecticut Bank and Trust Company, where he rose to CEO and chair of the board. In his vice president role at Trinity, he was responsible for overseeing fundraising and management of the college's endowment, as well as long-range financial planning.

When former Trinity President Theodore Lockwood '48, H'81, went on a six-month sabbatical following his wife's sudden passing in 1980, English stepped in as acting president. On July 1, 1981, he assumed the president's role outright and immediately turned his focus to several priorities, including the college's academic program, Trinity's vital relationship with its Hartford home, and the fiscal health of the institution.

With President English's encouragement, the college added writing and mathematics proficiency requirements, as well as an interdisciplinary minor requirement. The five-part distribution requirement, which fostered well-rounded intellectual growth, also was implemented. He also approved Trinity's participation in the CTW Library Consortium with Connecticut College and Wesleyan University, greatly expanding the library's offerings. College-related programs in Hartford, including internships and faculty and student opportunities at area organizations, flourished under President English. The Trinity campus also became home to a daycare center that continues to serve children of Trinity community members and local residents. His vast experience in finance proved useful as the Campaign

for Trinity capital campaign shattered its \$42 million goal by more than \$8 million.

In 1989, at his last Trinity Commencement as president, in light of all he had done for the college during his eight years as the helm, President English was awarded an honorary doctor of humane letters degree; he also served as that year's Commencement speaker.

His was a family dedicated to Trinity. His wife, Isabelle, was awarded an honorary doctor of fine arts degree in 1988 in recognition of her many contributions to the college, and his father, the late Reverend James Fairfield English, was a member of the Trinity Class of 1916. In fact, President English's first glimpses of Trinity were said to be when his father took the young boy to see the recently completed Chapel.

President English's return to Trinity later in life took a winding path. After graduating from what became The Loomis Chaffee School, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. He completed a Japanese language program and served in the 441st Counter Intelligence Detachment in the occupation of Japan. Upon his return, he earned a B.A. in English from Yale and went on to earn an M.A. in English from Cambridge University and an LL.B. from the University of Connecticut School of Law, where he was a part-time faculty member for several years.

President English's dedication to community service did not begin or end with Trinity. During the course of his career, he served on the boards of a number of corporations, including the CBT and its successors, Cigna, Emhart, Heublein, Connecticut Natural Gas, and the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. He also served on the boards of several nonprofits, including Hartford Hospital, the Wadsworth Atheneum, and Connecticut College, and he led the boards of The Loomis Chaffee School, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, and the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority.

During his later years, President English and his wife spent increased time at their home in the coastal village of Noank, making it their sole residence in 2009. There he was active on the boards of the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut and the Mystic Seaport Museum, where he filled in briefly, in 2001, as interim president and director.

President English is survived by his wife, Isabelle Spotswood Cox English; children James Fairfield English III, Margaret Stuart English Unsworth, and William Berkeley English; 10 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his daughter Alice Bradford English Johansson and sister Janet English Dorman.

A memorial service is planned for a later date. On behalf of the entire Trinity community, I extend our deepest sympathies to the entire English family.

Sincerely,

Joanne Berger-Sweeney  
President and Trinity College Professor of Neuroscience