

Roger Williams (2017)



March 14, 2018: Evan Pugh and his Vision for Penn State

June 9, 2021: Frederick Watts and the Founding of Penn State

From 2003 until his retirement in 2015, Roger L. Williams served as Executive Director of the Penn State Alumni Association and Associate Vice President of the University. During those 12 years, he and his talented staff advanced the Alumni Association's standing as the largest dues-paying alumni association in the world, growing it from 146,000 to more than 177,000. From 1995 to 2003, he served as chief communications officer for Georgetown University and the University of Arkansas, in addition to consulting with Dick Jones Communications. From 1986 to 1995, he served as assistant vice president and executive director of University Relations at Penn State, where his operation won the nation's top award in Overall Institutional Relations from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education in both 1991 and 1992. He also served as affiliate associate professor of higher education at Penn State. He is author of more than 30 published articles and chapters and three books, all published by Penn State University Press: *The Origins of Federal Support for Higher Education: George W. Atherton and the Land-Grant College Movement* (1991); *Evan Pugh's Penn State: America's Model Agricultural College* (2018); and *Frederick Watts and the Founding of Penn State* (2021). In 2007, he was one of four co-editors of *The Future of the American Public Research University* (Rotterdam: SensePublishers).

He holds three degrees from Penn State: bachelor's in history (1973), master's in journalism (1975), and doctorate in higher education (1988). In 1989, he won the Dissertation-of-the-Year Award from the Association for the Study of Higher Education. A State College resident, he currently serves as president of the Centre County Historical Society. He is a member of the Dean's Development Council of Penn State's College of Education as well as the Penn State All-Sports Museum Advisory Board. He also serves on the WPSU-TV Board of Representatives. He was named the University's Lion's Paw Medalist in 2017 and was inducted as a Distinguished Alumnus of the University in 2018. In 2024, he and his wife Karen Magnuson were named the University's Renaissance Fund honorees, helping to raise \$385,000 for an endowed scholarship fund that supports academically gifted students with severe financial need.

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