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WKU regent named to Forbes, Savoy magazines lists for Black excellence

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George Nichols III

Submitted

Western Kentucky University Regent George Nichols III has been recognized by Forbes magazine as one of its inaugural Culture 50 Champions and by Savoy magazine as one of 2021's Most Influential Black Corporate Directors.

Nichols is president and CEO of The American College of Financial Services in Pennsylvania.

Forbes named Nichols as one of its Culture 50 Champions, which it describes as a list of “models of business excellence in their own various industries who also uplift Black and Brown communities through their crafts and philanthropic efforts.”

“These are our stars. Our champions,” Forbes said. “They are tech innovators, social justice warriors, filmmakers, TV executives and more.”

Topping the Forbes list are Colin Kaepernick, an activist and former San Francisco 49ers quarterback, and Issa Rae, co-creator and star of the HBO series “Insecure,” among other luminaries in the Black community.

Nichols has also been credited by Savoy, a Black business and lifestyle magazine, as one of its 2021 Most Influential Black Corporate Directors.

A Kentucky native, Nichols studied at WKU and holds a bachelor’s degree from the school. His achievements include becoming the first Black insurance commissioner in Kentucky, where he led regulatory efforts of a \$10 billion insurance industry through his expertise in health insurance reform and financial services integration, according to his official biography.

Nichols then went on to a 17-year stint at New York Life, the third-largest insurance company in the country. There, he held key roles in sales, strategic initiatives, and public policy, according to his bio.

In an emailed statement to the Daily News, Nichols described himself as a man of faith and said he views his work through that lens – especially in recent years as the high-profile killings of Black men by police have galvanized a social justice movement against racism.

“I am a man of deep faith and have let God drive my career, trusting in the opportunities that presented themselves to me,” Nichols said. “I do not feel it’s a coincidence that here I am, the first African American president of The American College of Financial Services, appointed a year before social unrest revived urgency for actual change, with a platform to address the wealth gap in America,” Nichols said. “My mother instilled in us that it was ‘better to be known of a good name than of great wealth’ and ‘only what you do for others will last.’

I continue to be in awe of the recognition. Indeed, it is not what I ever imagined. Yet, even if it ceases, I will continue this path to advocate for economic justice.”

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