



Name in English: Phyllis M. Wise

Name in Chinese: 王斐丽 [王斐麗]

Name in Pinyin: Wáng Fěilì

Gender: Female

Birth Year: 1945

Birth Place: New York, New York

Current location: Urbana and Champaign, Illinois

Profession (s): Scientist, Professor, University Administrator

Education: Bachelor of Arts, Biology, Swarthmore College, 1967; Master of Arts, University of Michigan, 1969; Ph.D., Zoology, University of Michigan, 1972; Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Michigan, 1972-1974

Awards: 2012, Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education Award; 2011, Chang-Lin Tien Educational Leadership Award, Asian Pacific Fund; 2009, Service Award, Association of Chairs of Departments of Physiology; 2008, Honorary Doctorate of Science, Swarthmore College; 2008, Member, National Academy's Institute of Medicine; 2008, Fellow, American Association for the Advancement of Science; 2004, Roy O. Greep Award for Excellence in Endocrine Research, Endocrine Society; 2004, Quiet Heroes of America, Parade Magazine; 2003, Mentor Award, Women in Endocrinology; 2002, Excellence in Science Award, Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB); 2001-2011, National Institutes of Health, MERIT Award; 1998, Solomon A. Berson Distinguished Lectureship Award, American Physiological Society; 1991, Nathan W. Shock Memorial Lecture Award, National Institute on Aging;

Contribution (s): The parents of Dr. Phyllis Wise came to study in the United States and were scheduled to return to China on December 12, 1941. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and points all across the Pacific that forced the United States into World War II changed their plans. Dr. Wang had earned an MD from Beijing Union Medical College prior to earning a doctorate from Northwestern University. Mrs. Wang had graduated with a nursing degree from Yenching University, Beijing, before pursuing a nursing education degree at Columbia Teacher's College. They settled in New York City where their daughter was born and raised. Her mother had quite a distinguished life, becoming a nurse educator at Cornell University and developing the first nurse practitioner program. She also managed to send enough money back to China to enable her mother and six siblings to come to the United States one by one.

After completing her post-doctoral studies at the University of Michigan Dr. Wise was hired at the University of Maryland in Baltimore in 1976 and became a full professor of physiology in 1987. In 1993 she joined the University of Kentucky in Lexington and held

the position of professor and chair of the Department of Physiology until 2002 when she became Dean of the College of Biological Sciences at the University of California at Davis. She left UC Davis in 2005 and became a professor of Physiology and Biophysics, Biology, and Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Washington as well as taking the administrative position of Provost.

In her scientific work she has been particularly interested in whether hormones influence the brains of women and men during development, as an adult, and during aging and after brain injuries. Her research proved that the unique physiology of women makes them more susceptible to cardiovascular and neurodegenerative disease and has helped explain why estrogen is a powerful protector against conditions such as stroke and cardiovascular disease in some women but not in others. Her discoveries have enabled physicians to treat their patients more effectively and propelled women's health issues into becoming a greater priority in medical science research.

From 2001 to 2011 Dr. Wise held the distinction of twice becoming an honoree of the National Institutes of Health MERIT award program. The NIH created the MERIT award program to provide stable long-term grant support to investigators whose research skills and productivity are "distinctly superior" and who are highly likely to continue to perform in an outstanding manner.

In addition to her continuing scientific work she held progressively senior university administrative positions. From Provost of the University of Washington in 2005 she earned the additional position of President for Academic Affairs in 2007. From 2007 to 2010 she held the post of Provost and Executive Vice President, becoming the 2nd highest ranking administrator at the university and exercising leadership in educational and curriculum development, allocation of budgets and space, long-range strategic planning, and management of university research programs. Among her main accomplishments was creating a new school within the university, the College of the Environment, which brought together several previously neglected programs and gave them more of a voice in university priorities and budget allocations. About her rise to academic leadership she said modestly, "If anything, I've been the person who's been put into positions that I'm not totally qualified for — where I feel that I have to run to be able to meet the expectations of people, including my own expectations of myself."

Because the previous university president left to assume a position with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in 2010 it was decided to appoint Dr. Phyllis Wise as the interim president. She became the first woman to officially hold the position (Mary Thayer, the interim president of 1874, has never been officially recognized as such by the university) and the first Asian American. She knew she'd come under particular scrutiny, both for the rarity of being a woman and an Asian American leader of a major American university. "When you are the first, you have extra responsibilities so that you don't let everyone down, so that you meet the expectations of everyone. If you succeed, they will be particularly proud, and if you fail, they will be particularly disappointed."

Although there was some speculation that she would be contending for the top post she announced that she shouldn't be considered for the permanent position. In 2011 she briefly reverted to Provost and Executive Vice President once a permanent president was picked before accepting the position of Chancellor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Vice President of the University of Illinois. With an annual budget of \$1.5 billion, \$400 million in research expenditures, 42,000 students, and more than 1,800 tenure-track faculty members, the university is one of the largest public universities in the United States.

She has served on a number of scientific advisory committees and including the Council of the National Institute on Aging, the RAND Health Board of Advisors, the Bullitt Foundation Board of Trustees, the Scientific Advisory Board of the Allen Institute for Brain Science. She is also a member of the prestigious National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine. She serves of the corporate board of directors of Nike Corporation for which she is the Chair of the Corporate Responsibility Committee.

Philanthropy: Joining the corporate board of directors of Nike in 2009 was controversial as the University of Washington athletic program had business dealings with the company and for controversies over the company's overseas manufacturing practices and treatment of workers. As quoted from the Seattle Times newspaper, "In the end, Wise resolved the firestorm by donating all her Nike compensation to student scholarships, and Nike announced in July it would contribute \$1.54 million to a relief fund for about 1,500 laid-off Honduran workers who were former Nike employees. Last fiscal year, Nike directors earned between \$132,000 and \$217,000 each in cash and stock, according to the company's annual statement."

Publications/Patents: Dr Phyllis Wise is the author or co-author of over 200 articles and research papers in endocrinology. She has also written articles about leadership for the website LinkedIn

["Team of Rivals": What I Learned about Hiring the Best and Shouldering Blame No Diversity? No Excellence](#)
[An Unexpected Path: How I Became Chancellor](#)

External Links:

<http://oc.illinois.edu/bio.html>
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