

# Ed College Names Florida Professor Dean

YSU – Dr. Clara M. Jennings, associate dean of the College of Education at the University of West Florida in Pensacola, FL, had been named dean of the School of Education at YSU effective in August.

A native of Arkansas, Jennings is the first African-American named as a college dean at YSU. She was among 39 candidates considered for the position.

Jennings is the second African-American and the second woman to be appointed to a top-level position by President Cochran.

“Dr. Jennings’ outstanding academic and administrative credentials and her belief that we must do more to reach out to the local schools and to the community at large will enrich YSU and our community,” said Cochran. “I am pleased that the top candidate from our national search has agreed to serve as dean of our college of education.”

Dr. James J. Scanlon, provost

at YSU, said Jennings will provide strong leadership within the University and community on matters relating to the strengthening of teaching and learning.

“Dr. Jennings has an excellent background and firm commitment to faculty development and educational partnerships with the schools,” Scanlon said. “She is a distinguished African-American educator whose career spans several states and the international setting.”

Jennings, who has served in her current position at the University of West Florida since 1990, indicated she was excited about the opportunity to be at YSU. “The challenges are great, but YSU is on the move. I am excited to be a part of the team!”

“As the educational landscape continues to change in the 1990s, educators and educational institutions must continue to change,” Jennings said. “I see that happening at YSU, with the leadership of



**Dr. Jennings**

Dr. Cochran and the cooperation of dedicated faculty members. We can create a new future.”

Jennings said she will search for ways for YSU’s School of Education to reach out to school districts throughout the valley.

“I think we can find new ways to encourage and support the educational process in the community. This is especially important in relation to the inner-city,” Jennings said.

In addition to serving as as-

sociate dean of the College of Education at the University of West Florida, Jennings holds the rank of associate professor of early childhood, language arts and reading. She earned her doctorate in elementary education and language arts at Michigan State University in 1973. She also holds a master’s degree in elementary education from Wayne State University in Detroit and a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.

Prior to becoming an associate dean at the University of West Florida, Jennings served as a Roundtree Caldwell Bryan Distinguished Professor of Education and chair of the Education/Social Sciences Division of Arkansas College in Batesville, AR. She has also served as an administrative fellow to the provost and vice president for academic affairs and director of several projects at UWF.

Prior to her tenure at UWF, Jennings served in faculty positions at Grambling State University in Louisiana, the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and Herbert H. Lehman College in New York City. She has also served as a professor in Greece with the Office of Overseas Schools of the U.S. State Department, coordinator of the Early Childhood Education Program of Ferris State College of Education in Michigan and as a consultant to Michigan Department of Higher Education.

Jennings has taught kindergarten and first, second and third grade in Michigan and Missouri. She has also published a book titled *Good Programs for Young Children* and has published many articles about her research on early childhood education and education in general.

Jennings and her husband, Dr. James E. Jennings, a professor at the University of West Florida, have two daughters, Toi Renee and Terri Lynn.