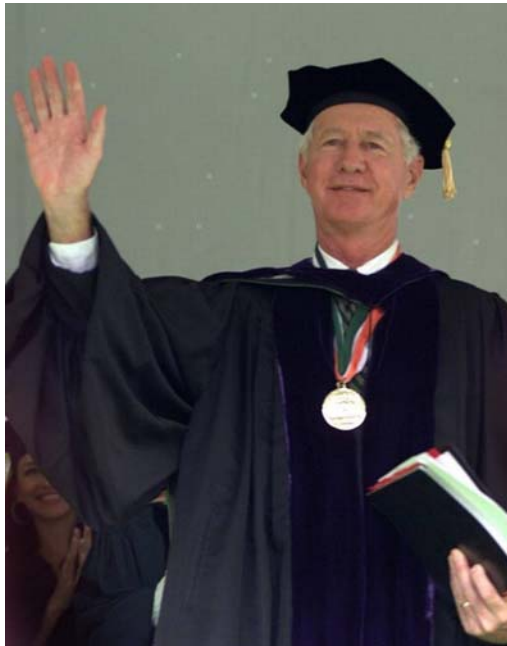


# Long-serving ex-president of UM 'Tad' Foote dies

## HIGHLIGHTS

UM's fourth president was the longest serving at a private university

He died at 78 from complications of Parkinson's Disease



< 1 of 2 >

Edward T. "Tad" Foote II the fourth president of the University of Miami waves during graduation ceremony at The University of Miami's 2001 Commencement. **Al Diaz/Herald staff**

BY JOAN CHRISOS, SUSAN MILLER DEGNAN AND RORY CLARKE  
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Edward Thaddeus 'Tad' Foote II, who transformed the University of Miami from Suntan U into an academically rigorous university with a growing national reputation during his 20-year tenure as president, died Monday night, University of Miami officials announced. He was 78.

He died from complications of Parkinson's Disease, his daughter Julia Foote LeStage said Monday night, adding he died peacefully at East Ridge nursing facility in Cutler Bay.

"This is a sad day, but also a day of celebration for an extraordinary life," she said.

"We lost a great man today," Foote's son, William, posted on Facebook. "He loved people, especially his immediate and extended family, and saw the dignity in everyone from every walk of life."

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**HE WAS A REMARKABLE LEADER AND A REAL GENTLEMAN. THE  
UNIVERSITY IMPROVED GREATLY UNDER HIS TENURE.**

Donna Shalala, former University of Miami president

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Foote was UM's fourth president and the nation's longest-serving one at a private university, serving from 1981 to 2001. He was replaced by Donna Shalala.

"He was a remarkable leader and a real gentleman," Shalala said Monday night in an email. "The University improved greatly under his tenure."

UM's newest president, Julio Frenk, installed last month, acknowledged the work done by Foote to elevate UM: "President Foote's tenure ... was marked by a far-reaching and rigorous pursuit of academic excellence that helped to distinguish our students and faculty among the finest in the nation. Together with his late wife, Roberta "Bosey" Fulbright Foote, they made Miami their home, and we are a far better and stronger institution and community thanks to them."

A former dean of the law school at Washington University in St. Louis, Foote was only 43 when he succeeded Henry King Stanford as UM president in 1981.

Mark Rosenberg, president of Florida International University, noted how Foote was "a visionary. He understood the importance of taking the University of Miami to the next level."

Miami Dade College President Eduardo Padrón recognized how Foote brought a collegial, cooperative spirit among South Florida's universities and colleges: "He reached out to the other institutions here. He was both a scholar and a gentlemen. He was someone who brought respectability to UM, who really really cared about the institution. ... He made a mark at the university."

Indeed, he did. His highlight reel included:

- Spearheading a capital fundraising campaign that was the second-largest in the history of American higher education at the time, raising \$517.5 million.
- Purchasing or constructing nearly 50 buildings.
- Bolstering students' academic quality. In 1982, Foote pared undergraduate enrollment by 2,500 to 8,500, raising the standards of incoming students. Entering freshmen in the fall 2000 had an average SAT score of 1200, about 100 points higher than the Class of 1981. Today, UM's mean SAT score is 1295.
- Pumping up sponsored research conducted by university professors and scientists, with \$193.9 million being spent on research in 2000, up from \$58.1 million in 1981.
- Creating three new colleges — the School of Architecture, School of Communication, and the Graduate School of International Studies.
- Increasing the number of full-time faculty members by 560.
- Championing the university's athletic program. Under Foote, UM won four national championships in football and three College World Series titles. The school also reinstated the men's basketball program.

“President Foote left an indelible mark on the University and was a tremendous supporter of athletics,” Miami Athletic Director Blake James told The Miami Herald by text message on Monday night. “He will be missed by so many and our thoughts and prayers are with his family.”

But his tenure was marked, too, by turbulence.

There were natural disasters such as Hurricane Andrew in 1992, which cost UM \$23 million in damages and lost revenue. Foote led the recovery and within a year, the campuses were not just back to normal, but better than ever.

And then there were manmade troubles, often stemming from the university’s football program.

In 1995, the NCAA slapped sanctions on the football program after a series of scandals from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, including allegations of team members taking cash for plays on the field. There were also off-field incidents of violence and drug use.

In 1987, some of the team’s football players wore camouflage fatigues before the Fiesta Bowl to show a battlefield mentality. They also walked out of a bowl-sponsored event and got into a shouting match with some of the fans. Foote would later say he was “embarrassed” by the team’s behavior.

Foote took measures to turn things around, earning the respect of many.

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**HE WAS CRITICIZED BY SOME ATHLETIC PEOPLE WHO THOUGHT HE DIDN'T SUPPORT ATHLETICS ENOUGH. I'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED WE COULDN'T STAND ON ATHLETICS ALONE. I THOUGHT HE STRUCK A GOOD BALANCE BETWEEN ATHLETICS AND ACADEMICS.**

G. Holmes Braddock, 90, who served on the Miami-Dade County School Board for 38 years

Foote also earned accolades in his work to improve South Florida. He rallied Miami’s power elite to create The Miami Coalition For A Safe and Drug-Free Community, of which he was founding chairman. He received the University of Miami Faculty Senate’s James W. McLamore Outstanding Service Award, the National Conference for Community and Justice’s Distinguished Community Service Award, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce’s Sand In My Shoes Award, and the Miami Herald/El Nuevo Herald’s Charles Whited Spirit of Excellence Award.

A native of Milwaukee, Foote earned his bachelor’s degree from Yale University and a law degree from Georgetown University.

“I knew him fairly well, talked to him many times over the years,” said G. Holmes Braddock, 90, who served on the Miami-Dade County School Board for 38 years and has a high school named after him. “I think Tad did a great job.

“He was criticized by some athletic people who thought he didn’t support athletics enough. I’ve always believed we couldn’t stand on athletics alone. I thought he struck a good balance between athletics and academics. We won four of five national football

titles and [three] national baseball titles under him. The Hurricanes couldn't have won all those championships if he had not supported athletics."

Modesto Alex "Mitch" Maidique was president of FIU during approximately the same period as Foote's UM tenure. Maidique said he knew Foote well.

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**DONNA SHALALA'S SPECTACTULAR TENURE MOVED UM INTO THE FRONT RANKS OF AMERICAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES. ... SHE WAS STANDING ON THE SHOULDERS OF A GIANT, AND THAT GIANT WAS TAD FOOTE.**

Modesto Alex "Mitch" Maidique, former president, Florida International University

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"I think that when the history of higher education in Miami is written, Tad Foote will stand as a legendary figure," Maidique said. "I think it is he, above all others, that began the transformation of UM from a regional private university to major national research university. I think he brought a sense of class and a commitment to excellence to UM.

"Donna Shalala's spectacular tenure moved UM into the front ranks of American private universities. .. She was standing on the shoulders of a giant, and that giant was Tad Foote."

Perhaps Foote said it best. He told The Miami Herald in a 2001 article: "This is America's newest national university. It can compete with the best ... I have been the luckiest man in higher education to have had the opportunity to lead this university."

Foote is predeceased by his wife, Roberta "Bosey" Fulbright Foote, who died in May. He is survived by three children — Julia, William and Thaddeus — and eight grandchildren.

*Miami Herald Staff Writer Howard Cohen contributed to this report.*

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**Name:** Edward Thaddeus "Tad" Foote II

**Personal:** Born Milwaukee, Wis., Dec. 15, 1937. Married April 18, 1964 to Roberta "Bosey" Waugh Fulbright, daughter of late Arkansas Sen. J. William Fulbright. Children: Julia, William, Thaddeus.

**Education:** B.A., Yale University, 1959; LL.B, Georgetown University.

**Professional:** Reporter, Washington Star, 1963-64; Washington Daily News, 1964-65; associate, Bryan, Cave, McPheeters & McRoberts, St. Louis, 1966-70; vice chancellor, general counsel, Washington University, 1970-75; Dean, School of Law, Washington University, 1973-1980; special advisor to chancellor and board of trustees, 1980-81, Washington; president, University of Miami, 1981- present.

**Community:** Florida Council of 100, Southern Florida chapter; Metro-Miami Action Plan, executive commission; Miami Citizens Against Crime, founding chairman; Miami Coalition for a Safe and Drug-Free Community.

**Other:** 1st Lt., U.S. Marine Corps, 1959-1962. Author, An Educational Plan for Voluntary Cooperation Desegregation of Schools in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area, 1981.

Source: Miami Herald archives, Marquis Who's Who in America, University of Miami

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