

Mark Nordenberg

In a University of Pittsburgh career now spanning more than forty-five years, Mark Nordenberg has held a succession of key leadership positions, including Dean of the School of Law and Chancellor of the University. During his nearly two decades of service as its Chancellor, Pitt achieved dramatically higher levels of quality and impact on virtually every front. During that same period, the higher education and healthcare sector played a critical role in the rebirth of the regional economy.

Nordenberg currently serves as Chair of Pitt's Institute of Politics and Director of its Dick Thornburgh Forum for Law & Public Policy and holds the special faculty rank of Distinguished Service Professor of Law. For more than thirty years, Pitt's Institute of Politics has facilitated searches for common ground by providing a non-partisan forum for elected officials and other civic leaders to address policy issues of importance to Western Pennsylvania. The Dick Thornburgh Forum for Law & Public Policy – named in honor of the former two-term Pennsylvania Governor, U.S. Attorney General under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Herbert Walker Bush, and United Nations Undersecretary General -- offers public programming on important global, national, and regional policy issues. The Institute also includes the Elsie Hillman Civic Forum, which is named after the beloved and highly respected civic leader and philanthropist, and which sponsors programs designed to nurture a commitment to civic engagement in Pitt students.

Public service – at all levels of government and at the request of leaders from both political parties – has been a hallmark of Nordenberg's career. One recent, and critically important, assignment began in May of 2021, when the Justices of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court unanimously appointed him Chair of the Pennsylvania Legislative Reapportionment Commission, which included as its other four members the Democratic and Republican caucus leaders from the state Senate and House of Representatives. Despite extended pandemic-related delays in the delivery of census data and the challenges presented by a highly polarized political environment, the Commission produced a plan that was responsive to significant population and demographic shifts, adopted by a four to one bipartisan vote within the Commission itself, upheld by a unanimous state Supreme Court, and praised by the leaders of both good-government groups and groups representing communities that traditionally have been underrepresented in the electoral process.

Among many earlier roles, Nordenberg served as co-chair of the bipartisan Legislative Commission on Restructuring Pennsylvania's Urban Schools, chair of the Oversight Committee on Regional Workforce Development, chair of the Leadership and Governance Committee of the Mayor's Commission on the Pittsburgh Public Schools, chair of the Citizens' Advisory Group on the Efficiency and Effectiveness of City-County Government, and chair of the Independent Nominators Committee created to ensure that appointments to the Pittsburgh Water & Sewer Authority board were merit-based. He also served as co-chair of the Education subcommittee of Republican Governor Tom Corbett's transition committee, as a member of Governor Corbett's Advisory Commission on Post-Secondary Education, as a member of the steering committee for Democratic Governor Tom Wolf's transition committee, and as honorary co-chair of Republican Auditor General Timothy DeFoor's transition committee.

In the same month that he was appointed chair of Pennsylvania's Legislative Reapportionment Commission, Nordenberg received the Lifetime Achievement in Governance Award from the National Association of Corporate Directors, Three Rivers Chapter, reflecting his significant governance contributions to many of Southwestern Pennsylvania's most important organizations. He served for more than sixty combined years on the boards of three of Pittsburgh's largest employers – UPMC, Pitt and BNY Mellon. As technology-based economic development became increasingly important to the region, he was the founding Co-Chair, with Carnegie Mellon University President Emeritus Jared Cohon, of the boards of the Pittsburgh Digital Greenhouse, Life Sciences Greenhouse and Robotics Foundry. He has served on the boards of such other impactful organizations as the BNY Mellon Foundation for Southwestern Pennsylvania, Manchester Bidwell, the Pittsburgh Technology Council, Thiel College, the United Way of Allegheny County, and the Urban League of Pittsburgh. Nordenberg also chaired the boards of the Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education and the Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Universities, served on the Executive Committee of the Association of American Universities, chaired the board of the Big East athletic conference, and served on the executive committee of the NCAA.

In the aftermath of the attack on worshippers at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life synagogue, Nordenberg was invited to serve on the small independent committee created by the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh to fairly disburse millions of dollars of undesignated donations made to its "victims of terror fund." As co-chairs of that group's subcommittee on memorialization, commemoration, and education, he and President Emeritus Cohon laid the foundation for the Collaboratory Against Hate, a research initiative jointly launched by Pitt and Carnegie Mellon. At the same time, he joined with Laura Ellsworth, a former student and now the partner-in-charge of global community service initiatives for the international law firm Jones Day, to found and co-chair the Eradicate Hate Global Summit, which already has been recognized as the most comprehensive anti-hate conference in the world.

Nordenberg has received many important forms of recognition, including being honored, with President Emeritus Cohon, as Pittsburgh's Persons of the Year by *Pittsburgh* magazine, being named a History-Maker by the Senator John Heinz History Center and being awarded the Louis and Barbara Thiel Distinguished Service Award by Thiel College. To honor his many accomplishments and contributions, Pitt trustees and other donors personally endowed both a professorship and an undergraduate scholarship program in his name. Pitt's newest residence hall also is named for him. Pitt's University Senate and Staff Association Council dedicated two marble benches, which sit outside the Chancellor's Office windows, to honor Nordenberg and his wife, Dr. Nikki Nordenberg, for their contributions to the University. The faculty Senate honored him as the only sitting Chancellor to receive its annual award for service to the Senate, the Pitt Alumni Association named him a Distinguished Alumni Fellow, and Pitt students named a social space in the William Pitt Student Union "Nurdy's Place" in his honor. In 2016, he was awarded both the *Distinguished Leadership Award* from the American Red Cross and the *Mary Schenley Medal for Parks and Stewardship* from the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy. In 2018, Nordenberg was recognized as a *Distinguished Alumni for Excellence and Leadership in Education* by North Allegheny School District. In 2019, he was named a *Trustee Emeritus* by Thiel College's Board of Trustees. In 2021, Nordenberg was awarded the *Lifetime Achievement in Governance* by the National Association of Corporate Directors, Three Rivers Chapter.

In 2025, Nordenberg was elected to the prestigious **American Academy of Arts and Sciences**, which was founded in 1780 to honor excellence and convene leaders from every field of human endeavor to examine new ideas and address issues of importance to the nation and the world. Also, in 2025, he was awarded the inaugural *Jim Roddey Leadership Award*.

Nordenberg's academic specialty is legal process and civil procedure. He was the first Pitt law faculty member to receive the excellence-in-teaching award now presented annually by the law school's graduating class. He also was one of the first Pitt faculty members to receive the Chancellor's distinguished teaching award, recognizing university-wide teaching excellence. While Dean of Pitt's School of Law, he served on both the U.S. Advisory Committee on Civil Rules and the Pennsylvania Civil Procedural Rules Committee. He also served as Reporter for the Civil Justice Advisory Group of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania. He regularly served on the planning committee for the Third Circuit Judicial Conference, as well as various committees and programs of the Allegheny County Bar Association and the Academy of Trial Lawyers of Allegheny County. He co-founded the "Intensive Course in Trial Advocacy" for practicing lawyers – which, during his years as law faculty member and dean, was annually co-sponsored by the Allegheny County Bar Association and Pitt's School of Law.

Nordenberg is an honors graduate of suburban Pittsburgh's North Allegheny High School, Thiel College, and the University of Wisconsin Law School. He has been awarded honorary degrees by Carnegie Mellon University, the Community College of Allegheny County, Duquesne University, LaRoche University, Thiel College, and the University of Pittsburgh.