



Ruth J. Simmons was sworn in as the 18th president of Brown University on July 3, 2001. She also holds appointment as professor in the Department of Comparative Literature and the Department of Africana Studies. A native of Texas and a 1967 graduate of Dillard University in New Orleans, Louisiana, she was president of Smith College from 1995 until the time of her appointment at Brown. Dr. Simmons received the Ph.D. in romance languages and literatures from Harvard University in 1973. She has written on the works of David Diop and Aime Cesaire and is the author of a book on education in Haiti. Recently, she has spoken and written on a wide array of educational and public policy issues, including diversity, liberal arts, science education, and the role of women in society. Dr. Simmons is the recipient of a number of prizes and fellowships, including the German DAAD and a Fulbright Fellowship to France.

In 1983, after serving as associate dean of the graduate school at the University of Southern California, Dr. Simmons joined the Princeton administration. She remained at Princeton for seven years, leaving in 1990 for two years to serve as provost at Spelman College. Returning to Princeton in 1992 as vice provost, she continued in that role until June 30, 1995. As vice provost, she was deputy to the provost and executive secretary of the Priorities Committee, the university's budget committee. In 1993, invited by the president to review the state of race relations on the Princeton campus, Dr. Simmons wrote a report that resulted in a number of initiatives that received widespread attention. In 1995, she became president of Smith College, the largest women's college in the United States. During her tenure the college launched a number of important and innovative initiatives, including an engineering program, the first at a women's college.

President Simmons serves as a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, and the Council on Foreign Relations. Active in a wide range of educational, charitable, and civic endeavors, she holds honorary degrees from numerous colleges and universities, including Amherst College, Dillard University, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Dartmouth College, Princeton University, Northeastern University, Boston University, Mount Holyoke College, University of Pennsylvania, New York University, George Washington University, Washington University in St. Louis, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Columbia University, and Harvard University. In 1997, she was awarded the Centennial Medal from Harvard University, in 1999 the Teachers College Medal for Distinguished Service from Columbia University, and in 2001 the President's Award from the United Negro College Fund. She serves on a number of boards, including the Carnegie Corporation, Pfizer Inc., Texas Instruments, and the Goldman Sachs Group.