Yeshiva U. President to Quit After More Than 25 Years

By KAREN W. ARENSON

Norman Lamm, the president of Yeshiva University in Manhattan for the last 25 years and one of the longest-serving university presidents in the United States, announced yesterday that he would step down in August 2002.

Dr. Lamm, 73, is the third president of a New York research university to announce his resignation this month, following George Rupp at Columbia and L. Jay Oliva at New York

University.

"I didn't want to be carried out feet first," Dr. Lamm said in an interview yesterday. "I always wanted to finish my tenure at the top, the acme. The university has reached a pinnacle of its development. It has further to go, but I feel I am leaving

it in good shape."

Dr. Lamm's resignation opens the question of the future religious tilt of Yeshiva's colleges and its theological seminary, which have long embodied the tenets of modern Orthodoxy — a philosophy based around the integration of traditionally rigorous Judaism and modern culture. But in recent years, they have been pulled more toward stricter forms of Orthodox Judaism.

"It's been a matter of speculation and a great deal of concern that it will be very hard to find a modern Orthodox successor to Dr. Lamm," said Rabbi Irving Greenberg, president of the Jewish Life Network, an educational foundation in New York, who is associated with the modern Orthodox movement. He is also chairman of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

Robert M. Beren, the university's chairman, said the university did not plan to change its direction. "This university is the world center of modern Orthodoxy and that's where we intend to stay," he said yester-

day.

Dr. Lamm was the first Americanborn president of the 115-year-old university, which started as a day school for boys on Manhattan's Lower East Side and today is an independent, secular university under Jewish auspices centered on 185th 6treet in Washington Heights, one of its four campuses.

"He assumed leadership of the university as it teetered on the brink of bankruptcy and gradually nursed it back to health. As at other universi-

ties, economic prosperity and strong financial markets in the 1990's have significantly bolstered Yeshiva University's finances. Its endowment is now \$875 million, up from about \$25 million in the 1970's and more than double what it was in 1995.

Today the university has 6,600 students and more than 1,000 faculty members spread among 17 schools and affiliates, including Yeshiva College (the undergraduate college for men), Stern College for Women, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, the Sy Syms School of Business and the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, a rabbinic seminary. Its undergraduates spend half their day in Judaic studies and half in traditional university studies, in the arts and sciences or in business.

Mr. Beren, chairman of Yeshiva University's board of trustees, said that the board would conduct an international search for a successor and that Dr. Lamm "will continue to play a major role in defining the priorities of the university and the Jewish community."

The trustees voted yesterday to make Dr. Lamm chancellor when he

steps down as president.

Dr. Lamm said that while he expected to pursue projects outside the university, he would maintain a base there as chancellor, a job that he would shape.

"It will be what I make of it," he said. "The new president will have the day-to-day responsibility and pressures, and I'll try to help him."

Asked whether his successor would necessarily be a man, Dr. Lamm said that the university traditionally sought a president who is both an academician and a Talmudic scholar. "There are women coming up as Talmudic scholars," he said, "but none have yet reached that level of scholarship in the Talmudic community."

Dr. Lamm was a Yeshiva University student himself, a chemistry major who graduated summa cum laude and was class valedictorian in 1949. He pursued graduate work in science at Polytechnic Institute in Brooklyn for a year while he continued his religious studies and preparation to become a rabbi at Yeshiva, where he earned a Ph.D. in Jewish philosophy. He subsequently joined the Yeshiva faculty.