

Clarence D. Armbrister, J.D.
14th President of Johnson C. Smith University

Clarence D. “Clay” Armbrister became the 14th president of Johnson C. Smith University on January 1, 2018. Armbrister, who brings over 35 years of experience in the private and public sectors, has an extensive background at all levels of education, including time in senior administrative and leadership positions at Temple University, Johns Hopkins University, the School District of Philadelphia and Girard College. In addition to his background in education, Armbrister has held executive positions in law, government and finance.

Armbrister joined Temple University in 2003 and for the next five years progressed from Senior Vice President for Administration to Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. During his tenure, Armbrister was responsible for \$400 million in capital projects on several campuses and managed the campus through a rapid conversion from primarily a commuter school to a residential campus. He also led Temple’s management, planning and coordination of student affairs, facilities management services, campus safety services, intercollegiate athletics, computer and information services, affirmative action, enrollment management services, and management analysis. Additionally, he served as Chief of Staff to the President and Senior Vice President at Johns Hopkins University and more recently, President and Chief Executive Officer at Girard College.

Armbrister has been successful at the highest levels of municipal government, working with some of the most well-known politicians in the recent history of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. He was appointed Philadelphia City Treasurer by then-Mayor Ed Rendell, who was subsequently elected Governor of Pennsylvania. Armbrister also served as former Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter’s first Chief of Staff.

He has a long history of volunteer service. Currently, Armbrister serves on the boards of Charlotte Regional Business Alliance, Charlotte Center City Partners, Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health and Health Partners Plan, Inc. He is the former President of the National Adoption Center Board of Directors and served on the Community College of Philadelphia Board of Trustees.

A native of Miami, Armbrister received a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and economics from the University of Pennsylvania, and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Michigan Law School. His wife, Denise, is a Senior Vice President of Wells Fargo Corporation. They have five children and three grandchildren.