

Tribute to Dr. Allen Copping

Dr. Allen Copping, the second dean of the LSU School of Dentistry, who served as Chancellor of LSU Medical Center and later as president of the LSU System, died on December 1 at his home in New Orleans, following a lengthy illness. He was 84.

“Dr. Copping was beloved in the dental community,” said Dean Henry Gremillion. “He looked for ways to advocate for dentistry. He was highly effective because of his convictions and sincerity.”

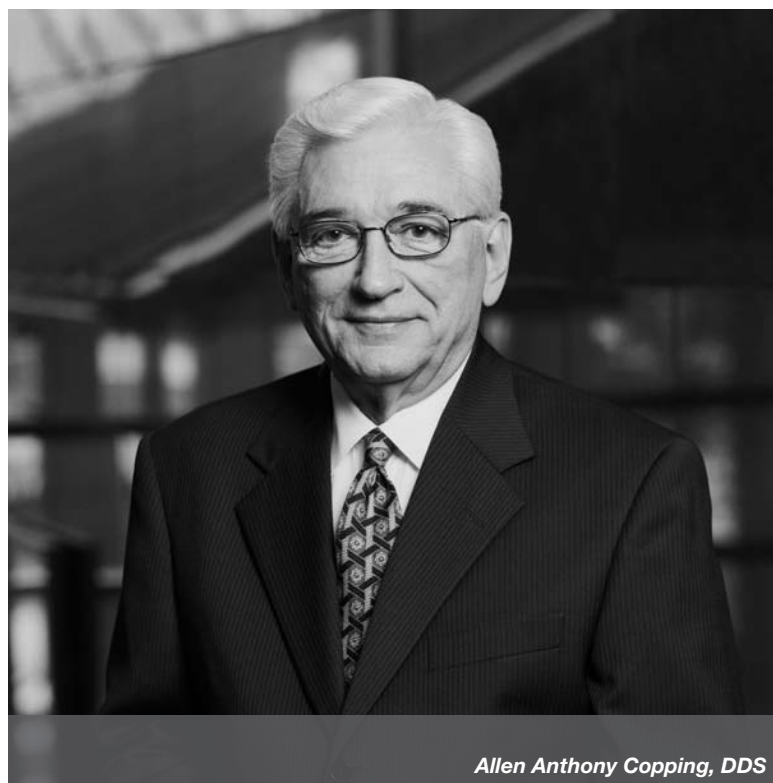
During the 2008 LSUSD Alumni Day ceremonies, Dr. Copping officiated at the dedication of the two renovated auditoriums. He later addressed the large crowd of 300 alumni who responded with a standing ovation.

Dr. Copping, a New Orleans native, received his Doctor of Dental Surgery in 1949 from Loyola University School of Dentistry in New Orleans. He served in the US Navy for five years during the Korean War and was head of oral surgery on a hospital ship. After discharge, he returned to New Orleans where he maintained a private dental practice before going into medical education and rising rapidly through administrative ranks.

He was head of the Loyola University School of Dentistry Department of Dental Anatomy from 1956 to 1970 and subsequently served at LSU School of Dentistry as associate dean. He was named dean for a short time in 1974 until he became chancellor of the LSU Medical Center in New Orleans. In 1985 he was appointed by the Board of Supervisors to lead the LSU System, retiring from the position in 1999.

Dr. Copping was known for his quiet dignity and self-effacing demeanor. In the mid-1980s he helped secure a \$125 million gift from Baton Rouge oilman C. B. “Doc” Pennington. That gift led to the founding of the Pennington Biomedical Research Center, which has since developed an international reputation for research into diabetes and obesity. The Pennington gift was considered the largest single contribution ever made to an educational institution at that time.

His contributions to medicine and research are remembered annually with the Allen A. Copping Excellence in Teaching Awards, which recognize outstanding faculty at the LSU Health Sciences centers in New Orleans and Shreveport who have demonstrated a life-long pursuit of discovery and inspire their students.



Allen Anthony Copping, DDS

According to LSU System President Dr. John Lombardi, “Dr. Copping’s contributions to the history of the Louisiana State University System and this state were extraordinary.” He cited Dr. Copping’s “broad vision” and “exceptional leadership.”

Dr. Lombardi noted Dr. Copping’s management of LSU’s two health sciences centers and the university’s statewide network of hospitals and clinics, adding, “Dr. Copping was a mentor for many of Louisiana’s academic and health care professionals. His legacy is a testament to the exceptional leadership that defines America’s best academic institutions.”

Dr. Larry Hollier, chancellor of LSU Health Sciences Center, said that Dr. Copping helped create what has become an outstanding medical education and health care delivery system. “He helped transform LSU Health Sciences Center into one of the largest complexes in the City of New Orleans and Louisiana’s academic health leader,” said Dr. Hollier. “His impact on higher education in Louisiana was unprecedented, and his legacy lives on.”



Dean Gremillion and Dr. Copping, who served as dean of LSUSD in 1974 prior to his appointment to chancellor.