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Robert A. Kennedy - Biography

Robert A. Kennedy became the interim president of the University of Maine on Aug. 15, 2004. A plant biochemist with a long and distinguished scholarly career, Kennedy has held academic leadership positions at some of the nation's most prestigious universities. He has been at UMaine since July 2000, serving first as Vice President for Academic Affairs. One year after his arrival, he was promoted to the position of Executive Vice President and Provost.



Kennedy is a Minnesota native who graduated from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, in 1968. After a stint in the U.S. Army, he earned a Ph. D. in botany from the University of California, Berkeley in 1974. Kennedy began his academic career on the faculty of the University of Iowa, followed by faculty appointments at Washington State University, The Ohio State University, the University of Maryland and Texas A&M University. He served as Associate Dean and Director of the Colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the University of Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station for one year, before being promoted to the vice presidency for research at that university's Maryland Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources. Immediately before coming to UMaine, Kennedy served for eight years as Vice President for Research and Associate Provost for Graduate Studies at Texas A&M.

In the late 1980s, Kennedy worked for three years in the Division of Molecular Biosciences and the Division of Cellular Biosciences at the National Science Foundation in Washington, D.C.

At UMaine, Kennedy has played a central role in developing and executing the university's teaching, research and statewide public outreach missions. He has led the university's well-received strategic planning process, which has helped to provide direction for four years of growth and advancement in targeted critical areas.

Kennedy's wife, [Mary Rumpho-Kennedy](#), is a UMaine Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. They reside in Veazie and are the parents of four sons.