

Robert A. Altenkirch
President, The University of Alabama in Huntsville

Robert A. Altenkirch was named president of The University of Alabama in Huntsville on September 21, 2011. Prior to this appointment, he served as president of New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) for nine years. During his tenure as president, NJIT's research expenditures doubled from their 2001 level, and fall 2011 enrollment was the largest in the school's history.

Dr. Altenkirch earned his B.S. from Purdue University, an M.S. from the University of California, Berkeley, and his Ph.D. from Purdue, all in mechanical engineering. With particular expertise in combustion and heat transfer, he served as the principal investigator for 10 space shuttle experiments on the behavior of flames spreading in a reduced-gravity environment and is a Fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. He has an extensive record of economic development and public service and was recognized in 2009 as one of the 101 most influential people in the state of New Jersey.

Prior to his appointment as president of NJIT, Dr. Altenkirch was vice president for research at Mississippi State University (1998-2002). He is credited with creation of the foundation for significant growth in MSU's research program, which reached nearly \$160 million in science and engineering expenditures for 2002, as reported to the National Science Foundation (NSF).

Dr. Altenkirch was dean of the College of Engineering at MSU (1988-1995) when the NSF awarded the institution the Engineering Research Center (ERC) designation. The ERC has become a nationally prominent center for computational fluid dynamics research and applications. While at MSU, he provided leadership for the development of the Thad Cochran Research, Technology & Economic Development Park, a multi-tenant incubator facility, and he helped lead efforts to secure a \$1 billion investment in the state of Mississippi by Nissan.

Dr. Altenkirch served as faculty member and department chair in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Kentucky (1975-1988), and, in addition to serving as dean of Engineering at MSU, also served as dean of the College of Engineering and Architecture at Washington State University. (1995-1998). He and his wife Beth have a daughter, Allison, who with husband Brian and son Jackson live in New York City.