

# McLaurin lies on resume, resigns from SBC executive post

August 17, 2023

NASHVILLE—Willie McLaurin has resigned as interim president and CEO of the SBC Executive Committee, after confessing he lied about his educational background on his resume.

In an email to members of the Executive Committee, Chairman Phil Robertson stated the presidential search committee that was considering McLaurin for the permanent post discovered “disqualifying information during their process of vetting and due diligence.”

McLaurin wrote in his resignation letter that “in a recent resumé that I submitted, it included schools that I did not attend or complete the course of study.”

He confessed the deception to Robertson and Neal Hughes, chair of the presidential search committee, on Aug. 17.

Baptist Press reported McLaurin’s resume listed degrees from North Carolina Central University, Duke University Divinity School and Hood Theological Seminary.

Hughes said three search committee members spent four weeks individually investigating the validity of the degrees. Each school confirmed McLaurin never graduated from that institution.

“To the Southern Baptists who have placed their confidence in me and have encouraged me to pursue the role of President & CEO of the SBC Executive Committee, including pastors, state partners, entity servants, colleagues, and SBC African American friends, I offer my deepest apologies,” McLaurin

said in a resignation letter submitted to Executive Committee officers. "Please forgive me for the harm or hurt that this has caused."

Philip Robertson, chairman of the SBC Executive Committee, noted that in a "commitment to transparency" the EC will be issuing "further updates related to next steps to the presidential search team and SBC Executive Committee's staff leadership in the near future."

Robertson added, "I want to express my deep appreciation for your prayers for the SBC Executive Committee's members and staff as well the presidential search team. The need for God's wisdom and direction is paramount at each and every point in the process of searching and selecting the next president and CEO of the SBC Executive Committee. Please keep the EC staff and the McLaurin family in your prayers."

The Executive Committee is scheduled to meet Sept. 18-19.

McLaurin served as interim since Feb. 1, 2022. Prior to that role, he served as vice president for Great Commission relations and mobilization at the Executive Committee for two years, coming to the role in January 2020.

He served with the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board from 2005 until going to the Executive Committee. Prior to that role, McLaurin was executive pastor at Greater Missionary Baptist Church in Clarksville, Tenn., and senior pastor at Greater Hope Baptist Church in Union City, Tenn.

He has also served as an interim pastor for numerous Southern Baptist churches.

McLaurin previously served on the SBC Resolutions Committee in 2018 and as president of the Black Southern Baptist Denominational Servants Network in 2011-12.

He also was on the executive board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention

from 2003 to 2005 and was the inaugural president of the African American Fellowship of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

McLaurin is a member of Simeon Baptist Church in Antioch, Tenn. He and his wife, Antonia, have two daughters, Sienna and SiChanna.

He is the first African American to have led an SBC entity and followed Ronnie Floyd, who resigned as Executive Committee president and CEO in October 2021. Floyd served in the role for less than 30 months before leaving the post.

*Compiled from reports by The Baptist Paper and Baptist Press.*