April 20, 2022

Dear Campus Community,

I am writing to share with you the sad news that Dr. Thomas W. Cole Jr., who served as chancellor of UMass Amherst in 2007 and 2008, passed away on April 14 at the age of 81.

In 2007, Dr. Cole was happily retired as president emeritus from Clark Atlanta University but generously agreed to serve as UMass Amherst chancellor on an interim basis until the Board of Trustees appointed Robert C. Holub to the position permanently in 2008. His reason for doing so, he said at the time, was his deep admiration for the special nature and academic quality of UMass, as well as its extraordinary history and reputation.

Although I did not have the pleasure of knowing Dr. Cole personally, I have heard from many people who have extremely fond memories of his time at UMass Amherst. It is truly remarkable to hear about the impact he had and all the lives he touched on our campus in only a year. A more detailed account of Dr. Cole’s contributions to UMass and other colleges and universities, particularly Historically Black Colleges and Universities, can be found on the university’s news site.

Sincerely,
Chancellor Kumble Subbaswamy