

Percy A. Pierre was born on January 1, 1939 in Welcome, Louisiana. He received his B.S. and M.S. degrees from Notre Dame and his Ph.D. in electrical engineering from Johns Hopkins. He was the first African American to earn a Ph.D. in this field. In 2009, he became the first MSU faculty member to be elected to the National Academy of Engineering. Pierre held several posts within government and higher education, including working as a White House Fellow, as a dean at Howard University, assistant secretary for research and development for the U.S. Army, and president of Prairie View A&M University. In 1990, Pierre came to MSU as vice president for research and graduate studies and became a professor of electrical and computer engineering in 1995. His many research achievements include exploring linear functionals of random functions. He provided leadership in funding the establishment of the MSU Food Safety/Toxicology Center, reestablishing the Graduate School and creating the Office of Intellectual Property. He has been an advocate for supporting minorities in engineering, helping to create several independent organizations for that purpose. At MSU, he created the Sloan Engineering Program, which recruits, helps fund, and mentors domestic engineering doctoral students, with an emphasis on underrepresented groups. Pierre retired in 2005, but continued on a part-time basis, and returned to the faculty full time in 2010.