GIDEONSE HAILED; 20 YEARS IN POST

Brooklyn College President Warns of Resignations by So Many School Heads

A college president who is completing his second decade in office warned yesterday of the "startlingly high number of resignations by able college and university presidents long before the usual age of retirement."

Harry D. Gideonse, president of Brooklyn College, made the remark while responding to tributes at a luncheon in his honor at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

In one year, he said, the heads of Oberlin, Mills, Radcliffe, Smith, Amherst, Sarah Lawrence and the State University of New York have resigned. He noted that the average term of office of the American college or university president was less than five years "in a profession that is deeply committed to 'tenure.'"

Dr. Gideonse said that "a crazy-quilt mixture of public relations and financial pressures makes it increasingly difficult to retain the services of established college presidents, or to recruit the services of new entrants to a profession in which there are no discernible relations between the nominal criteria for appointment and the real reasons for successful survival."

"How can we distinguish more clearly," he asked, "between an academic career that is rooted in 'public relations' techniques and a reputation that is anchored in professional achievement?" He suggested the application of the standards of "consumer research" might help.

The Rev. Laurence J. McGinley, president of Fordham University, called Brooklyn College "not only about the largest liberal arts college in the country but also one of the best." This is due in no small measure, he said, to Dr. Gideonse's "masterful, tireless, good-humored, real leadership."

Father McGinley said that the dual system of public and private higher education exemplified by Brooklyn, a municipal college, and his own university, "expresses the unity characteristic of America and its society."

"This is because they share basic purposes and aims such as a devotion to public service through education of those who "understand and accept the privileges and duties of citizenship," he said.

Other tributes came from Dr. Jay E. Greene, alumni president; Gustave G. Rosenberg, chairman of the city's Board of Higher Education; Leo Cherne, director of the Research Institute of America; Prof. William Howard Steiner for the faculty, and Alan Dershowitz for the undergraduates. Dean Francis P. Kilcoyne presided.

More than 700 alumni, students, teachers and associates in Dr. Gideonse's work with the Woodrow Wilson Foundation and Freedom House attended.

A distinguished teacher award of $500 was made to Miriam Heffernan, Assistant Professor of English.