

Robert Gilbert Jr. has retired from the Holyoke Community College Board of Trustees.

After serving as a trustee for 12 years, including the last eight as chair, the West Springfield resident and



**ROBERT
GILBERT JR.**

retired chairman of Dowd Insurance Agencies of Holyoke retired after presiding over his last board meeting on Nov. 28.

Gilbert was appointed to the board in April 2011 by Gov. Deval Patrick, serving in various capacities, including chair of the Audit Committee and member of the Finance Committee. In October 2015, Gov. Charlie Baker named him as board chair, succeeding Helen Caulton-Harris, commissioner of the Springfield Department of Health and Human Services.

In his eight years as chair, Gilbert served alongside three HCC presidents: William Messner, who retired in 2016, Christina Royal, who retired in July, and George Timmons, HCC's fifth and current president.

Making a surprise appearance at Gilbert's last meeting was Royal, who praised him for his stewardship of the college.

Timmons presented Gilbert with a chair emblazoned with the Holyoke Community College seal.

Until Gov. Maura T. Healey names a successor, trustee Vanessa Smith will serve as interim chair.