

SBC leader Willie McLaurin resigns after admitting he falsified resume

by [Bob Smietana](#)

August 21, 2023



Willie McLaurin, interim president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention's executive committee, speaks during a meeting on June 13, 2022, in Anaheim, California. (RNS photo by Adelle M. Banks)

Willie McLaurin, the acting president of the Southern Baptist Convention's executive committee, resigned suddenly on August 17 after admitting he had falsified his resume.

"While considering McLaurin as a candidate for Floyd's permanent replacement, the SBC Executive Committee's Presidential Search Team discovered disqualifying information during their process of vetting and due diligence," said Philip Robertson, chairman of the SBC executive committee, in a statement. "McLaurin's education credentials that he presented in his resume are false."

The statement quoted from McLaurin's resignation letter, saying he admitted falsifying his resume.

“In a recent resume that I submitted, it included schools that I did not attend or complete the course of study,” McLaurin reportedly said in resigning.

According to [Baptist Press](#), an official SBC publication, McLaurin [claimed](#) that he had degrees from North Carolina Central University, Duke University Divinity School, and Hood Theological Seminary on his resume. When presidential search committee members attempted to confirm those degrees, they learned he did not hold those degrees.

McLaurin had been interim president and CEO of the executive committee [since](#) February 2022 and had worked for the executive committee since 2020. The committee oversees the business of the nation’s largest Protestant denomination between the SBC’s annual meetings.

McLaurin had been in the [running](#) for the permanent role as executive committee president after the committee [rejected](#) a different candidate. If he had been named to that post, McLaurin would have been the first Black leader to head a major Southern Baptist entity.

His departure marks another leadership challenge for the executive committee. McLaurin became interim president after Ronnie Floyd, the previous president, [resigned](#) in October 2021 after months of controversy over the SBC’s sexual abuse crisis. Floyd’s predecessor, Frank Page, [resigned](#) in 2018 due to misconduct.

The Southern Baptist Convention has seen a [series](#) of leaders resign in recent years, often in controversy.

Among them: former SBC president Paige Patterson, who was fired for mishandling the investigation of a sexual assault at a seminary he led; David Platt, former president of the SBC’s International Mission Board, who resigned after a troubled tenure that included the loss of nearly 1,000 missionaries due to budget cuts; and Russell Moore, former president of the SBC’s Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, a critic of former President Donald Trump who had forced unwelcome discussions in the SBC on sexual abuse; and Adam Greenway, who resigned last fall from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary after concerns about the school’s finances.

“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 his resignation letter, according to Baptist Press. “Please forgive me for the harm or hurt that this has caused.”

Robertson asked for prayer in dealing with the fallout from McLaurin’s departure.

“In a commitment to transparency we 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 said. —Religion News Service