Sheila M. McDevitt elected chair of Board of Governors of the State University System of Florida

ORLANDO – The members of the Board of Governors of the State University System of Florida today elected Sheila M. McDevitt of the Tampa Bay area as the new chair of the board.

McDevitt assumes the lead of the Board of Governors on August 1 and will serve for two years. She replaces as chair Carolyn King Roberts, who will continue as a member of the Board of Governors.

Ava L. Parker of Jacksonville was elected vice-chair of the 17-member board.

McDevitt, a Tampa Bay area attorney who was appointed to the Board of Governors in 2003, said she was honored by the decision of her colleagues.

“I truly believe Florida’s public universities hold the key to the future of our state,” she said, “and so I recognize the importance of able leadership of the State University System. I look forward to working with my fellow board members and with members of the university boards of trustees as well as with the Legislature, the governor and the business community to make our institutions stronger.”

“We all share the same interest and the same goal – providing the education our citizens need and conducting the research and public service our state demands,” McDevitt said. “We face a lot of challenges, but nothing that we can’t work through by working together.”

McDevitt is of counsel as a member of the Corporate Practice Group of the law firm of Akerman Senterfitt in its Tampa office and the President of Sheila M.
McDevitt, P.L., a firm specializing in business, compliance and governance issues. Previously, McDevitt retired as Senior Vice President-General Counsel and Chief Legal Officer for TECO Energy, Inc. She remains actively involved in professional and community activities.

McDevitt served for 26 years with TECO Energy and its subsidiaries, beginning as governmental affairs counsel and, soon after, corporate counsel. She served as senior corporate counsel before being promoted to assistant vice president, vice president and assistant general counsel, and then vice president and general counsel in January 1999.

McDevitt was a member of TECO Energy’s Senior Leadership Team formulating and implementing corporate strategy and specific strategic initiatives and solutions to many significant issues affecting the corporation and its subsidiaries. In addition, she was responsible for the legal affairs of TECO Energy and managed the Legal, Governance, Corporate Compliance and Diversity and Corporate Communications Departments.

Aside from her management duties, McDevitt performed legal work in the areas of corporate governance, general corporate, mergers and acquisitions, project finance, human resources, risk management, and corporate compliance matters for all companies.

Prior to joining TECO Energy, she served as a trial attorney and branch office managing attorney for McClain, Walkley & Stuart, P.A. in Tampa. From 1967 to 1979, she served in various capacities for the Florida and Georgia legislatures.

McDevitt is a member of St. Leo University’s Board of Trustees (Chair 2005-2007) and a member of the Board of Visitors of Florida State University’s College of Law (Chair 2003-2005).

McDevitt received her Bachelor of Arts (1968) and Juris Doctorate (1978) degrees from Florida State University and was admitted to the Florida Bar in 1978. She has been admitted to practice in all Florida state courts and the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida. In 1989, McDevitt was admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Board of Governors is the constitutional body created by voters in 2002 to guide the State University System of Florida.