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Office of the President
October 14, 2012

Members, Board of Trustees:

HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS

Recommendation: that the Board of Trustees approve awarding the degree of Honorary Doctor of Arts to James Dee (“J.D.”) Crowe and an Honorary Doctor of Letters to David L. Lollis and an Honorary Doctor of Letters to Charles L. Shearer as approved and recommended by the University Faculty.

Background: Pursuant to the Conditions of Merit for Honorary Degrees, the University Joint Committee on Honorary Degrees has recommended to the elected Faculty Senators that the specified honorary degree be awarded to James Dee (“J.D.”) Crowe, David L. Lollis, and Charles L. Shearer. The elected Faculty Senators have approved the recommendation.

Biographical sketches of the recipients are attached.

Action taken: Approved Disapproved Other _____

James Dee ("J.D.") Crowe - Honorary Doctorate Citation - 2012

James Dee ("J.D.") Crowe, a native of Lexington and resident of Nicholasville, Kentucky began playing the banjo when he was 12 years old and was informally apprenticed to the late bluegrass music great, Earl Scruggs. In the mid 1950's, he was offered a job with Jimmy Martin's Sunny Mountain Boys while still in his teens.

In the late 1960's, Crowe formed the Kentucky Mountain Boys, principally performing in Central Kentucky and other areas of the commonwealth. By the early 1970's, J.D. changed the band's name to The New South and included material from rock and country music sources. Many important musicians have been a part of the band over the years, including Ricky Skaggs, Keith Whitley, Tony Rice, Jerry Douglas, and Doyle Lawson. After recording more than a dozen albums and having played literally all over the United States and in numerous foreign countries, Crowe is universally recognized as a great ambassador for Kentucky, and for bluegrass music. Inducted into the International Bluegrass Music Association's Hall of Fame in 2003, he is also a recipient of the Kentucky Governor's Award in the Arts for his contributions to the state's folk heritage.

The subject of a book-length biography and a 90-minute television tribute in recent years, Crowe is acclaimed for exemplifying the highest ideals of artistic creativity and musical innovation over a career that spans more than half a century.

This banjoist and bandleader's sense of service to the University of Kentucky is real and demonstrable. J.D. is revered as a teacher, and not only by other musicians privileged to join his band. When asked by UK faculty, he has freely and repeatedly donated his time to appear in English and music classes where students learn about Appalachian music and bluegrass music, as well as Kentucky and southern culture and history. Crowe humbly, yet readily shares with these students an abundance of detailed information and the unique perspective of a master artist.

This native son of the commonwealth has helped immeasurably to expand the audience for bluegrass music, Kentucky's enduring musical gift to the world. For all of his accomplishments, James Dee ("J.D.") Crowe is recommended for an honorary Doctor of Arts degree from the University of Kentucky.

David L. Lollis - Honorary Doctorate Citation - 2012

David L. Lollis is the past president of Appalbanc and is the past president of the Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises (FAHE). Appalbanc is an award-winning Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) whose primary mission is to promote individual and community development in rural central Appalachia through the financial products developed by the Human/Economic Appalachian Development Corporation (HEAD), the Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises, Inc. (FAHE), and the Appalachian Federal Credit Union (AFCU).

As president of FAHE, Lollis was responsible for the Federation's programs. He has an extensive background in administration and management, much of which has been in housing programs. David has worked for over 40 years in both the public and private sectors.

His federal government experience includes positions in the Commerce Department's Office of Business Economics; in the Labor Department's Employment and Training Administration; and in the Office of Economic Opportunity/Community Services Administration.

At the state government level Lollis served in the Kentucky Governor's Office, the Office of Policy and Management, and the Office of the Secretary of the Department for Human Resources. He was elected Chair of the Appalachian Advisory Council and was appointed by the Governor as a Commissioner of the Kentucky Appalachian Commission.

At the annual Kentucky Governor's Housing Conference in 1992, David was presented the Dorothy J. Williams' Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution for conceptualizing and directing quality housing programs in Kentucky.

Besides his distinguished record of community and government service, Lollis directed the Mount Beulah Center in Edwards, Mississippi under the auspices of the Christian Church. In this role, he was a tireless advocate for civil rights. David also worked as an associate professor at New York University in their Center for the Study of the Unemployed.

In retirement, he continues to serve on a number of national, regional, and local boards, and serves as a consultant on various projects. For all of his accomplishments, David L. Lollis is recommended for an honorary Doctor of Letters degree from the University of Kentucky.

Charles L. Shearer - Honorary Doctorate Citation - 2012

Charles L. Shearer, a native of Louisville, earned a bachelor of science degree in accounting, followed by a master's in diplomacy and international commerce, both from the University of Kentucky.

Intrigued by his first teaching assignment in higher education as an instructor at UK's Henderson Community College in the late 1960's, Shearer went on to pursue further graduate study, attaining his Ph.D. in economics from Michigan State University. Following additional teaching and administrative assignments, first at Michigan State, then at Albion College, Charles was named Vice President for Finance at Transylvania University in Lexington in 1979.

He was selected as president of Transylvania in 1983, beginning what would become a long and distinguished tenure at the helm of the 16th oldest college in the United States. During Shearer's 27 years at Transy's helm, the institution's student enrollment grew by more than 75 percent, with corresponding growth in the number of faculty members and majors offered. Fund-raising, together with financial aid and scholarship programs, increased exponentially under his leadership. Transylvania reached a number-12 ranking among national liberal arts colleges for its alumni participation rate. Ratings for the university's academic quality attained unprecedented heights. The school's endowment grew to an all-time high. The Bingham Program for Excellence in Teaching was established to reward outstanding faculty members. A number of state-of-the-art academic buildings, a new campus center, new residence hall construction, and greatly-improved facilities for athletics and recreation were added during Charles' nearly three decades as the university's top officer.

One of the most important initiatives in the area of athletics during Charles' tenure was the move from the scholarship-based National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (N-A-I-A) to the non-scholarship Division Three of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (N-C-A-A). This placed Transy among its peer institutions, with a dedication to the student-athlete ideal in the context of the overall academic and social purposes of the university.

In the community, President Shearer instituted the First-year Urban Program where freshman students actively participate in service projects. Other student service initiatives begun under his direction include Alternative Spring Break, Jump-Start, and an annual holiday party for children of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of the Bluegrass.

Charles' service on the boards of countless organizations, his selection as a recipient of numerous local, state, and national awards, and his principled leadership as a champion of intellectual rigor and academic freedom - For all of his accomplishments, Charles L. Shearer is recommended for an honorary Doctor of Letters degree from the University of Kentucky.