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Office of the President
April 1, 2014

Members, Board of Trustees:

HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS

Recommendation: that the Board of Trustees approve awarding the degree of Honorary Doctor of Humanities to Paul W. Chellgren and Harrison Benjamin Wilson, Jr. 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 Paul W. Chellgren and Harrison Benjamin Wilson, Jr. The elected Faculty Senators have approved the recommendation.

Biographical sketches of the recipients are attached.

Action taken: Approved Disapproved Other _____

Paul W. Chellgren

Paul W. Chellgren was born in Tullahoma, Tennessee on January 18, 1943 to Wilbur E. and Kathryn L. Chellgren. He spent much of his childhood in Ashland, Kentucky.

A 1964 graduate of UK, Mr. Chellgren also earned advanced degrees from Harvard University and Oxford University. From 1968-70, he served his country as a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Army.

Mr. Chellgren's business career accomplishments include serving as chairman and CEO of Ashland Inc., a global diversified energy and chemical company; operating partner in a leading venture capital firm, Snow Phipps; and co-owner of several businesses ranging from a horse farm, to restaurants, and an art dealership.

Of all of his accomplishments, it is Mr. Chellgren's profound generosity that is most impressive. It includes both his extraordinary philanthropy and his unselfish commitment to service. Mr. Chellgren has a reputation as a major supporter of the arts throughout the Kentucky region. Higher education in Kentucky has been the primary beneficiary of Mr. Chellgren's service. He serves on the Board of Trustees at Centre College and served two terms on UK's Board of Trustees. His educational service even extends to his adjunct teaching at Northern Kentucky University.

Beyond his participatory service, Mr. Chellgren's educational philanthropy has been pervasive and profound. He has contributed funds to support numerous student scholarships at multiple institutions in Kentucky, and he has donated considerable funding in support of the missions of these institutions. Importantly, the primary beneficiary of Mr. Chellgren's extraordinary giving has been the University of Kentucky. Across our campus one finds evidence of his benevolence. Whether it is in our buildings, such as the William T. Young Library, the renovated Main Building, or the current renovation and expansion of the Gatton College of Business and Economics; support of educational programs that benefit faculty and students, including the Chellgren Center for Undergraduate Excellence; or direct financial assistance to students, it is clear that he has invested significantly in this University.

Paul W. Chellgren is recommended for an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree from the University of Kentucky.

Harrison B. Wilson, Jr.

Harrison B. Wilson, Jr., was born in Amsterdam, New York on April 21, 1925. The tale of his life is storybook: humble beginnings, war service, successful student and athlete, eventually becoming the distinguished president of Norfolk State University for 22 years.

About 70 years ago, much like today, young men from across the region sought education and self-improvement through quality higher education. One young Kentuckian called June (Junior) by his five brothers and sisters, whose family hailed from Pendleton County, wanted to do the same. The year was 1946, and the young 21 year-old had just returned from World War II after serving his country in the U.S. Navy, ready to build a life of his own.

UK is where Wilson wanted to go. He was a Wildcat at heart, a star basketball player in high school and a slugger on the baseball field while in the navy. But in 1946, the University of Kentucky did not want June Wilson. He was a Negro and was denied the opportunity to attend UK.

He instead enrolled at Kentucky State University, a historically black college and then one of few higher education options available to young men like Wilson. Two years later, the University of Kentucky would finally admit Lyman T. Johnson as the first African-American to attend the UK graduate school.

Wilson became an honors graduate of Kentucky State University. He earned a master of science and doctoral degrees, both with distinction, from Indiana University in Bloomington, and performed postdoctoral work at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.

Wilson was a faculty member and head coach of the men's basketball team at Jackson State University in Mississippi for 16 years, compiling a record of 340 wins and only 72 losses. The academic retention rate of his players during his tenure was 98 percent.

He then served admirably at Tennessee State University in Nashville, Tennessee before being named executive assistant to the president at Fisk University, also in Nashville.

In 1975, Dr. Wilson was selected as president of Norfolk State University. Under his outstanding leadership, the university experienced transformative growth in all areas: student enrollment, budget, curriculum, campus size, physical facilities and status as a doctoral-granting university. He retired from Norfolk State in 1997.

Harrison B. Wilson, Jr. is recommended for an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree from the University of Kentucky.

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