

# PR 8

Office of the President  
June 21, 2019

Members, Board of Trustees:

## HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS

Recommendation: that the Board of Trustees approve awarding an Honorary Doctor of Engineering to F. Joseph Halcomb III, an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters to Porter G. Peeples, and an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters to Doris Y. Wilkinson, 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 recommended to the elected Faculty Senators that the specified honorary degrees be awarded to F. Joseph Halcomb III, Porter G. Peeples, and Doris Y. Wilkinson. The elected Faculty Senators have approved the recommendation.

Biographical sketches of the recipients are attached.

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Action taken:     Approved     Disapproved     Other \_\_\_\_\_

**F. Joseph Halcomb III**  
***Honorary Doctor of Engineering***

As the son of a small-town family doctor in southern Kentucky, Dr. F. Joseph Halcomb III grew up around the practice of medicine. From an early age, he was fascinated by the human body as an engineering marvel. He enrolled as a freshman at the University of Kentucky in 1969 and began his college career with a visionary concept: he wanted to pursue an academic program that combined medicine and engineering. With the help of two University of Kentucky professors, Dr. Halcomb began a study plan that prepared him for a groundbreaking career in the emerging medical device and biotechnology industries.

During his undergraduate career, Dr. Halcomb took pre-med courses alongside engineering courses. He earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky in mechanical engineering in 1974, and a medical degree in 1978. After graduation, Dr. Halcomb enrolled in the graduate mechanical engineering program at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). By the time he completed his MIT degree and his medical residency at the University of Kentucky, he recognized the need for mechanical engineering in orthopedics, and began his career in the orthopedic industry.

In 1980, Dr. Halcomb joined a world leading medical device company, Zimmer Biomet. In 1990, he was named Senior Vice President of Operations of Zimmer's Hall Surgical Division, and three years later became president. In 1995, he was recruited by Amgen, one of the earliest biotechnology companies, to apply his medical device expertise in building a venture in cell therapy. In 2006, Dr. Halcomb became Amgen's Vice President and directed a team that launched revolutionary products that expanded the company's reach to countless patients worldwide.

Dr. Halcomb has been a leading developer of joint replacement implants and other medical products that have changed the lives of millions of individuals around the world. His thoughtful philanthropy and passion for education has inspired him to assist University of Kentucky students who share the same interests in interdisciplinary study. In 2009, he established the Halcomb Family Endowed Fellowship in Medicine and Engineering at the University of Kentucky as a special tribute to his father. After a larger commitment to the endowment in 2016, the Department of Biomedical Engineering became the first named department in the College of Engineering at the University of Kentucky. His fellowship provides opportunities for graduate students in the College of Engineering and the College of Medicine to engage in premier interdisciplinary research in biomedical engineering.

Dr. Halcomb is a pioneer and innovator in what we now commonly call biomedical engineering. His contributions to modern medicine have had global application and have helped advance joint replacement surgery to its prominence in the world today. Most admirably, however, Dr. Halcomb is taking the fruit of his success and investing it in young people at his alma mater who share the same passion of serving our world to the best of their abilities.

Dr. F. Joseph Halcomb III is recommended for an honorary Doctor of Engineering from the University of Kentucky.

**Porter “P. G.” Peoples**  
*Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters*

From a very early age, Porter “P.G.” Peoples has recognized and valued the importance of education. A native of Lynch, Kentucky, Mr. Peoples grew up in the mountainous Appalachian region of southeastern Kentucky, and was the first person in his family to have the opportunity to attend college. Before coming to the University of Kentucky, Mr. Peoples was one of 50 African-American students at Southeast Community College. He continued to be a pioneer in education and became one of few African-American students to enroll and graduate from the University of Kentucky in 1968.

At only 22 years old, Mr. Peoples was named the Director of the Lexington Chapter of the Urban League in 1969, becoming the youngest Director in the United States. Since then, he has dedicated himself to the Urban League of Lexington and now holds the title of President and Chief Executive Officer. Through his commitment to the Urban League of Lexington, Mr. Peoples has served the Lexington African-American community in ways that benefit the lives of thousands of individuals.

As a result of his strong leadership and remarkable character, Mr. Peoples’ has been called on to serve in leadership roles that promote the common good throughout the community. He has been appointed to numerous boards and committees such as the Blue Grass Community Foundation, Saint Joseph Hospital Foundation, and the Kentucky Housing Corporation. Mr. Peoples also has served as Chair of the Kentucky Civil Rights Commission, Commerce Lexington Minority Business, Kentucky Community and Technical College System, and Fayette County Public Schools Equity Council.

Mr. Peoples has been inducted into the University of Kentucky College of Education Hall of Fame and the Kentucky Human Rights Commission Hall of Fame. Among numerous awards and honors, he has received the National History Makers Award, the University of Kentucky Lyman T. Johnson Award, and the Downtown Lexington Corporation Outstanding Individual Award as recognition of his commitment to make Lexington, and the University of Kentucky, a welcoming place for all individuals.

Mr. Peoples has been a champion and advocate for the disadvantaged of Lexington, and has done a tremendous amount of work for the basic needs of community members such as housing, sustainable employment, education, and fundamental fairness. He is a trusted and reliable voice whose leadership has made significant contributions to the University of Kentucky. Mr. Peoples is regarded as a servant-leader focused on the well-being of others and his impact on the Lexington community is profound.

Porter “P.G.” Peoples is recommended for an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from the University of Kentucky.

**Doris Y. Wilkinson**  
*Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters*

Dr. Doris Y. Wilkinson graduated from the University of Kentucky in 1958, becoming one of the first three African-American graduates from the University. She later earned her M.A. and Ph. D. from Case Reserve Western University, as well as an M.A. from Johns Hopkins University. In 1967, she returned to the University of Kentucky and became the first full-time African-American woman faculty member. Since then, Dr. Wilkinson has strived to make the University more welcoming for all staff, faculty, and students.

As an educator, Dr. Wilkinson has made many contributions to the study of sociology, and is a prominent and inspirational figure in the discipline. She has published articles and books on social theory, race, class, and gender. Dr. Wilkinson also has been a visiting professor at Harvard University, the University of Virginia, and Smith College.

While at the University of Kentucky, Dr. Wilkinson has been a pioneer and role model for the University and the Commonwealth. She is the founder and first director of the African-American Studies and Research Program at the University. In pursuit of more opportunities in African-American education, she created the African-American History Trail in Lexington, and established the Forum for Black Faculty, the Carter G. Woodson Lecture Series, and the Black Women's Conference.

Dr. Wilkinson was appointed to the Department of Interior task force on the National Parks System in 1972; and, in 1976, she became Chair of a social science panel for the National Science Foundation's Women in Science program. In 1978 she was initiated into Phi Beta Kappa National Honor Society, and from 1980-1984, Dr. Wilkinson served on the board of counselors of the National Cancer Institute. These are just a few examples of how Dr. Wilkinson's influence has spread far beyond the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

In honor of Dr. Wilkinson's admirable contributions to the University, state, and nation, she has received numerous awards and honors. Among those awards are the American Sociological Association's Dubois-Johnson-Frazier Award, a Ford Fellowship to Harvard, and the University of Kentucky's Hall of Distinguished Alumni Award.

A woman of many "firsts" and accomplishments, Dr. Wilkinson has flourished in the face of adversity. In 1958, a time of deep xenophobia and intolerance, Dr. Wilkinson bravely embarked on a journey for the education she desired and deserved. As a result of her perseverance, ambition, and devotion as an educator, Dr. Wilkinson has become a trail blazer and leader at the University of Kentucky. She has created numerous opportunities for those who come after her, and her contributions will continue to have a lasting impact on students, faculty, and staff.

Doris Y. Wilkinson is recommended for an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from the University of Kentucky.