

# ASACR 10

Office of the President  
April 23, 2026

Members, Board of Trustees:

## HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENT

Recommendation: that the Board of Trustees approve awarding an Honorary Doctor of Arts to Malcolm J. Wilson, as approved and recommended by the Honorary Degree Review Council.

Background: Pursuant to the Conditions of Merit for Honorary Degrees, the Honorary Degree Review Council reviewed and approved that the specified honorary degree be awarded to Malcolm J. Wilson.

A biographical sketch of the recipient is attached.

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

## **Malcolm J. Wilson**

Malcolm J. Wilson is an Appalachian documentary photographer, educator and founder of *Humans of Central Appalachia*, whose work spans more than four decades. He is dedicated to representing the people and culture of Central Appalachia with authenticity and respect. An accomplished photojournalist, his work has appeared in major publications and through national distribution, documenting themes of identity, labor, heritage and community while challenging longstanding stereotypes. Through *Humans of Central Appalachia*, he combines portraiture and oral history to elevate regional voices and broaden public understanding. His work has had significant cultural and social impact by amplifying perspectives of the region, fostering empathy and contributing to meaningful dialogue. He has been actively engaged in community response and advocacy, including during the 2022 Eastern Kentucky floods.

Wilson's contributions extend beyond his artistic work through a longstanding commitment to teaching and mentorship, including decades of workshops, youth engagement and the development of programs integrating photography, storytelling and oral history. He maintains a strong connection to the University of Kentucky through the donation of a substantial photographic archive to the University's Special Collections, supporting research, teaching and the preservation of Appalachian history and culture. Recognized with honors such as the Eastern Kentucky Leadership Award and a Lifetime Humanitarian Award, and with exhibitions featured nationally, including in our nation's capital, Wilson exemplifies sustained artistic achievement, deep service to the Commonwealth and a lasting educational impact. His work reflects a consistent commitment to authentic representation, community engagement and cultural preservation, aligning closely with the values the University seeks to recognize through honorary degrees.

Malcolm J. Wilson is recommended for an honorary Doctor of Arts from the University of Kentucky.