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Office of the President
September 12, 2025

Members, Board of Trustees:

ACCEPTANCE OF CHARITABLE GIFT COMMITMENT FROM THOMAS AND EMILY LAWTON TO BENEFIT THE COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY

Recommendation: that the Board of Trustees accept a charitable grant commitment totaling \$1,000,000 from Thomas and Emily Lawton to establish and support the existing non-endowed capital project fund named the “Ortho Graduate Clinic Renovation and Improvement Gift Fund” in the College of Dentistry. The fund supports the construction, renovation, and/or expansion of the College’s Orthodontic Graduate Clinic, located within the Dental Science Building.

Background: The Lawtons give to honor Dr. William R. Proffit as a teacher, mentor and one of the most influential orthodontists in the last fifty years. Dr. Proffit came to the University of Kentucky (UK) in 1965, served as the first Chairman of the Department of Orthodontics until 1973 and laid the foundation upon which the Orthodontic Graduate Program of the College of Dentistry stands to this day. He authored the textbook, Contemporary Orthodontics, still used in dental schools throughout the world. As a student of Dr. Proffit, both in the DMD program (Class of 1968) and the Graduate Orthodontic Program (Class of 1973), Dr. Lawton credits Dr. Proffit with shaping him into the professional that he became. Dr. Proffit also remained a friend of the College until his passing, periodically visiting the Graduate Program and meeting with Orthodontic residents.

Dr. Lawton grew up in Winter Park, Florida. After graduating from the University of Florida, he graduated from the University of Kentucky College of Dentistry with a Doctor of Dental Medicine degree, completing a one-year hospital internship in Boston. Following that, he completed his military obligation with the United States Coast Guard in Yorktown, Virginia, where he was Senior Dental Officer. He then returned to the University of Kentucky, where he completed a three-year residency in Orthodontics, graduating with a Master of Science degree in 1973.

At UK, Tom met his wife, Emily (“Emmy”), who earned her Bachelor of Arts in English in 1968. While living in Boston and Yorktown, Emmy taught English in the public-school systems. Their daughter, Lisa, was born in Yorktown and became a “Wildcat” when the family returned to UK in 1971 for Tom’s orthodontic residency. Their son, Brett, was born in 1974 and, following in his father’s footsteps, earned his DMD with honors from UK in 2000. Brett completed his orthodontic residency at the University of Florida in 2003, and

the two of them practiced together for 20 years, bringing smiles to thousands of Winter Park and other Central Florida patients. In 2008, they established a second office in Oviedo. Tom retired in 2025.

Action taken: ☒ Approved ☐ Disapproved ☐ Other _____