

FCR 4

Office of the President
September 15, 2023

Members, Board of Trustees:

ACCEPTANCE OF GIFT COMMITMENT FROM KENETTE SOHMER

Recommendation: that the Board of Trustees accept a gift commitment totaling \$1,040,000 (the “Gift”) from Kenette Sohmer, with \$1,000,000 of the Gift used to establish and support a new endowed professional scholarship fund named the “Kenette Sohmer Endowed Scholarship” and \$40,000 of the Gift used to establish and support a related non-endowed professional scholarship named the “Kenette Sohmer Scholarship” for the University of Kentucky College of Medicine.

Background: Kenette Sohmer, MD was a lifelong learner from an early age. After having advanced in her K-12 education, Dr. Sohmer joined her father, a college counselor at her high school, on a trip to the University of Kentucky. While the purpose of the visit was for Mr. Sohmer to connect his students with UK, the admissions office quickly focused on the aptitude of his daughter and offered her admission to the College of Arts and Sciences at the age of 15, before she had completed high school.

Dr. Sohmer’s academic success enabled her to be admitted early to the newly established UK College of Medicine prior to completion of a bachelor’s degree. In 1968, she joined the fifth class of this new medical school as one of its first female students.

During her time at UK, Dr. Sohmer focused heavily on academics and seeing patients at the new Albert B. Chandler Hospital. Despite her rigorous academic life, she found time to take in Kentucky’s rural heritage by acquiring horses and riding them regularly.

After graduation, Dr. Sohmer completed an internship in General Surgery at the University of Virginia and interviewed for residency at various locations. After not being welcomed as a woman at other locations, she returned to UK to join the second class of residents in the Department of Ophthalmology. She was the second student and first female to complete the program.

In 1972, Dr. Sohmer returned to her native New Jersey to begin practice at Hunterdon Medical Center. She established her own private practice in 1977 and continued the affiliation with the Hunterdon Hospital. Her hard work and excellent clinical outcomes have been lauded by her patients. She continues her solo practice and rigorous patient care schedule to this day but still finds time to teach medical students.

The Gift shall support one or more annual scholarships for professional students pursuing a Doctor of Medicine at the UK College of Medicine and who have demonstrated financial need. With this Gift, Dr. Sohmer hopes to provide full scholarships and support women and girls to emulate her fulfilling career in service to patients.

Action taken: ☒ Approved ☐ Disapproved ☐ Other _____