

# PR 7

Office of the President  
March 10, 2009

Members, Board of Trustees:

## HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS

Recommendation: that the Board of Trustees approve awarding the honorary degree of Doctor of Engineering to Mark E. Davis, Doctor of Science to William E. Kirwan, and Doctor of Letters to Helen Thomas, 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 Mark E. Davis, William E. Kirwan, and Helen Thomas. The elected Faculty Senators have approved the recommendation.

Biographical sketches of the recipients are attached.

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

**Mark E. Davis**  
**Honorary Doctor of Engineering**

Mark Davis embodies the University of Kentucky's spirit of academic excellence. He obtained three chemical engineering degrees from the University of Kentucky (BSChE, 1977; MSChE, 1978; Ph.D., 1981). While enrolled at UK on a track scholarship, he lettered in track and received an outstanding scholar-athlete award at UK. Dr. Davis was inducted into the University of the Kentucky Engineering Hall of Distinction in 1999.

Dr. Davis is currently the Warren and Katharine Schlinger Professor of Chemical Engineering at the California Institute of Technology. He received the Alan T. Waterman Award from the National Science Foundation in 1990. He is a member of the National Academy of Engineering (1997), the National Academy of Science (2006), and the Experiment Therapeutics Program of the Comprehensive Cancer Center at the City of Hope. Dr. Davis is the founder of Insert Therapeutics Inc. and Calando Pharmaceuticals, Inc., which researches cancer therapy alternatives.

For these reasons, Dr. Davis is recommended as a recipient of the 2009 Honorary Doctor of Engineering degree.

**William E. Kirwan**  
**2009 Nominee for Recipient of Honorary Doctor of Science**

William E. Kirwan has been a lifelong supporter and proponent of higher education. After receiving a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics from the University of Kentucky, Dr. Kirwan also obtained Master's and Doctorate Degrees in Mathematics from Rutgers University.

Dr. Kirwan served as the President of the University of Maryland, College Park from 1988 to 1998, the President of The Ohio State University from 1998 to 2002, and the Chancellor of the University System of Maryland since 2002.

Dr. Kirwan was appointed to the National Commission on Mathematics and Science Teaching for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and in 2007, he was the recipient of Maryland House of Delegates Speaker's Medallion, which recognizes Maryland's citizens who have demonstrated exemplary service to the State of Maryland. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the co-chair of the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics.

For these reasons, Dr. Kirwan is recommended as a recipient of the 2009 Honorary Doctor of Science degree.

**Helen Thomas**  
**2009 Nominee for Recipient of Honorary Doctor of Letters**

Helen Thomas, commonly referred to as ‘The First Lady of the Press,’ is a former White House Bureau Chief for United Press International. Helen Thomas is a trailblazer, breaking through barriers for women reporters while covering every President since John F. Kennedy. Born in Winchester, KY, Ms. Thomas served from 1961-2000 as a Presidential Correspondent and later Bureau Chief for United Press International.

She has published several books about her experiences, *Front Row at the White House: My Life and Times* and *Thanks for the Memories Mr. President: Wit and Wisdom from the Front Row at the White House*. In 2008, she published a book for children, *The Great White House Breakout*.

In addition, she was chosen as the first female president of the White House Correspondents Association in 1975 and the first female president of the Gridiron Club in 1993. She served as the President of the Women’s National Press Club from 1959-1960 and was named as one of the twenty-five most influential women in America by the World Almanac. She was inducted into the Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame as part of the initial class in 1981.

For these reasons, Ms. Thomas is recommended as a recipient of the 2009 Honorary Doctor of Letters degree.