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Office of the President
January 24, 2006

Members, Board of Trustees:

HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS

Recommendation: that the Board of Trustees approve awarding the honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities to Raymond Betts, Doctor of Letters to Seamus Heaney, Doctor of Letters to Abby Marlatt, and Doctor of Letters to Louise McIntosh Slaughter.

Background: The Committee on Honorary Degrees has recommended to the Graduate Faculty and the University Senate that an honorary degree be awarded to Raymond Betts, Seamus Heaney, Abby Marlatt, and Louise McIntosh Slaughter. These three bodies have expressed their approval of the recommendation.

Biographical sketches of the recipients are attached.

Action taken: Approved Disapproved Other _____

Dr. Raymond Betts

A prolific scholar and respected educator widely recognized in the scholarship of European history and European imperialism, Dr. Betts published nine books before retiring from the University of Kentucky in 1998, including the critically acclaimed *Uncertain Dimension*, a study of western imperialism in the 20th century. He has also published two more works since his retirement – *Decolonization* and *A History of Popular Culture: More of Everything, Faster and Better*. His work has been recognized by invitations to lecture at such prestigious institutions as Oxford University and the University of Leiden.

Dr. Betts was a professor of History at UK from 1971, and regularly taught large introductory courses in Western Civilization, in addition to upper-division and graduate courses. As well as serving as the director of the Gaines Center for the Humanities and director of the UK Honors Program, he was a member of the UK Board of Trustees from 1986 to 1992. He is the originator of the UK 101 program for incoming freshman and of the Emerging Leader Institute. Dr. Betts has also been the recipient of numerous university awards, including the University's Alumni Association Great Teacher Award (1979), the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching (1990), and the University's Outstanding Faculty Advisor Award (1992). In 1993 and 1994, he was recognized by graduating seniors in the College of Arts and Sciences as one of the ten most influential faculty members.

Dr. Betts has also devoted himself to promoting the advancement of teaching throughout his career as well as using his scholarship to contribute to the larger community. In 1974, he conceptualized and was instrumental in creating the Kentucky Association for Teachers of History, an organization to which he still contributes. He has regularly contributed op-ed pieces to the *Herald-Leader* and the *Courier-Journal*, and has also written for national newspapers such as the *Long Island Newsday* and the *Christian Science Monitor*. Dr. Betts has also been actively involved with Kentucky Educational Television as a consultant and producer of programs and was one of the first members of the board of directors of the Kentucky Humanities Council. He has also been involved with the Governor's Scholar Program and was on the advisory board of the *Kentucky Encyclopedia*.

For his many contributions to higher education, Dr. Betts is recommended for an Honorary Doctor of Humanities.

Seamus Heaney

Seamus Heaney's 1995 Nobel Prize for Literature and 1996 appointment as Ralph Waldo Emerson Poet in Residence at Harvard University recognized Heaney as one of the finest English language poets writing today. While best known for philosophic poetry that can "describe the complexity and pain of ethnic conflict," he is also a prolific essayist and renowned translator.

Native of Northern Ireland, Heaney went to school in Belfast, graduating with honors from Queen's College with a BA in English in 1961 and receiving a diploma in education from St. Joseph's College of Education in 1962. He spent 1971-72 as a visiting professor at Berkley and 1975-79 as Head of the Department of English at Carysfort Teacher Training College in Dublin. In 1979 he accepted an appointment at Harvard University, where he has remained except for a five-year term as Chair of Poetry at Oxford University.

Heaney is the author of thirteen books of poetry, six major translations, two published plays (both of which were performed), and six books of criticism. In addition to winning the Nobel Prize, he is the recipient of the W. H. Smith Award, the Duff Cooper Prize, Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres, two Whitbread Book of the Year Awards, and over twenty honorary degrees. Former President Clinton used a phrase of Heaney's to title his best selling memoirs, *Between Hope and History* (2004).

Heaney is also well known for his translation of *Beowulf*, a translation that was chosen for the *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, and won The United Kingdom's prestigious Whitbread Book for Book of the Year Award, an extraordinary achievement for a translation of an Old English poem.

In 2003, Heaney gave King Library Press two poems for printing as a limited edition broadside; it marked the first time the Press has printed first editions of a Nobel Laureate.

Recognizing this renowned Irish author honors the unique connection between Lexington and Ireland. For twenty years, Lexington has been a Twin City to Kildare, Ireland, which is known for its breeding of thoroughbreds. This Twin Cities relationship now includes a faculty and student exchange program. Lexington's and Ireland's horse industry have developed close ties and today Lexington is home to Irish immigrants, visitors, investors, and specialists working on local horse farms.

To highlight the intellectual, cultural, and economic ties between Lexington and the University of Kentucky with its Irish colleagues, an award to one of Ireland's finest poets and thinkers is fitting.

For his academic and creative excellence, Professor Heaney is recommended for an Honorary Doctor of Letters.

Dr. Abby Marlatt

Dr. Marlatt is a widely recognized advocate for equal social opportunity for racial minorities in Kentucky. During her early academic career in California and Kansas, she became increasingly active in counseling university students in nonviolent methods of social protest against racist social practices. When she arrived at the University of Kentucky in 1956, she found the city of Lexington and the state of Kentucky entrenched in segregationist practices. She thus engaged in counseling students in nonviolent social protest and to personally engage in such nonviolent protest herself against racist segregationist practices in Kentucky. The significance of her social leadership has been attested by many private and public organizations and Kentucky historians, including: the Kentucky Historical Society, Kentucky House of Representatives, National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights, Lexington *Herald-Leader*, and the Lexington Commission on Race Relations.

Dr. Marlatt earned her Ph.D. at Berkeley in 1947 and taught at Kansas State University and Beirut College for Women in Lebanon. She came to UK as the Director of the School of Home Economics in 1956. During the early 1960s, Dr. Marlatt participated in marches and sit-ins and often used her home as bond to get protesters out of jail. She was demoted and lost her teaching job for a year, despite state laws supporting academic freedom at UK, which stipulated that tenured faculty can only be dismissed for incompetence, neglect or refusal to perform duties, or for immoral conduct. Although Lexington's two newspapers at the time did not cover the local civil rights movement, editorials and letters to the editor criticized Marlatt's activism, particularly anti-war leafleting.

Dr. Marlatt did not bow to the criticism, however. She held firm that under the state law's protection of academic freedom she could not be properly dismissed from her tenured position for her expression of opinion. When the Board Hearing Committee issued its report, three faculty members on the committee stood behind Marlatt and ensured that she retained her tenured position. Her unwillingness to relent in 1962 preserved the integrity of this important protection against infringements on freedom of expression for future UK faculty and administrators.

Dr. Marlatt recently celebrated her ninetieth birthday.

For her contributions to civil rights and academic freedom, Dr. Marlatt is recommended for an Honorary Doctor of Letters.

Louise McIntosh Slaughter

In November 2004, Congresswoman Louise McIntosh Slaughter, a native of Harlan County, Kentucky, and UK alumnus, was elected to her tenth term in Congress as U.S. Representative for the 28th Congressional District of New York State. Representative Slaughter holds both a Bachelor of Science degree (1951) in Microbiology and a Master of Science degree (1953) in Public Health from UK.

Representative Slaughter is the Ranking Member on the influential House Committee on Rules, and the first woman from either political party to hold this position. A member of the House Democratic Leadership, she serves on the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee. In 2003, Representative Slaughter was chosen to sit on the newly created Select Committee on Homeland Security. She is the Democratic Chair of two congressional caucuses, the Congressional Arts Caucus and the Bipartisan Congressional Pro-Choice Caucus, and is the former co-chair of the Congressional Women's Caucus.

Representative Slaughter is an advocate of fair coverage in the media, striving to reinstate the Fairness Doctrine, which requires broadcasters to provide balanced, truthful coverage on important local and political issues. In late 2004, she authored the Meaningful Expression of Democracy in America Act, or MEDIA, a bill which would reinstate the Fairness Doctrine in an attempt to restore integrity and balance in the media.

As a microbiologist, Representative Slaughter is intensely involved in health issues. She is the leading expert in Congress on genetics issues and has authored legislation to protect citizens from discrimination by health insurance providers or employers based on genetic makeup. In 1997, she was awarded the American Public Health Association Distinguished Public Health Legislator Award for her work on health and genetics issues.

Representative Slaughter is also a strong advocate for women's rights and served as co-chair of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues during the 108th Congress and continues to serve as co-chair of the Bipartisan Congressional Pro-Choice Caucus. She co-authored the historic Violence Against Women Act in 1994 and wrote legislation to make permanent the Department of Justice's Violence Against Women Office.

During her eighteen years in Congress, Representative Slaughter has won numerous awards for her leadership and dedication to public service. She was the first Member of Congress to receive the Sidney R. Yates National Arts Advocacy Award, presented by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. In 2003, she was awarded the Humane Legislator of the Year by the American Humane Association. In January 1999, she was named, "Lay Educator of the Year" by the Rochester Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa International, the professional fraternity for men and women in education. In 2004, Women in Film and Vision honored her with its Woman of Vision award for her work on women's and arts issues.

For her contributions to public life in the United States, Representative Slaughter is recommended for an Honorary Doctor of Letters.