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Office of the President
March 9, 2005

Members, Board of Trustees:

HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENT

Recommendation: that the Board of Trustees approve awarding the honorary degree of Doctor of Science to Stanley Platek.

Background: The Committee on Honorary Degrees has recommended to the Graduate Faculty and the University Senate that an honorary degree be awarded to Stanley Platek. These three bodies have expressed their approval of the recommendation.

A biographical sketch of the recipient is attached.

Action taken: Approved Disapproved Other _____

Stanley Platek

As Vice President of Research and Development of Commonwealth Aluminum Corporation, Stanley Platek profoundly changed aluminum production in partnership with the University of Kentucky. “Mr. Platek has had a distinguished and innovative career which has influenced the worldwide Aluminum industry and the University of Kentucky’s research and educational missions,” asserts Dr. Subodh K. Das, President and CEO, Secat, Inc. and Director, UK Center for Aluminum.

Mr. Platek graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering in 1960. During his 42-year career with five major metal companies, Platek ceaselessly pursued innovations in the production of aluminum, receiving seven U.S. patents in the process.

His revolutionary Hazelett twin-belt continuous-casting process transformed the aluminum industry by reducing energy consumption and emissions while producing a more durable and quality-controlled product. Because of his innovations, more than 1.5 billion pounds of scrap aluminum are annually recycled into product components, including the first automotive grade aluminum strip acceptable for commercial vehicles.

Reducing energy consumption and producing less expensive, higher quality metal for consumers has had a direct effect on the U.S. metals industry, an industry important to Kentucky. Environmental and economic savings have been part of his message to our students. “Mr. Platek was able to instill values in our students that made them better scientists and citizens. His experience throughout the metals industry and across national boundaries enabled him to teach students the global significance of their research,” states Thomas W. Lester, Dean of the College of Engineering.

His mission to integrate the resources of business, federal research labs, and universities so that energy-saving aluminum technology could be rapidly applied to commercial applications brought him to University of Kentucky in 1988. While Vice President of Research and Development of Barmet Aluminum Corporation (which would become Commonwealth Aluminum Corporation), Platek initiated a research program with the university, annually providing \$25,000 in cash and \$50,000 in plant costs. The University of Kentucky’s partnership with Commonwealth Aluminum Corporation was instrumental in securing a fully funded grant from the U.S. Department of Energy. To this day, Commonwealth Aluminum Corporation continues to support research at the University of Kentucky. Mr. Platek’s initial collaboration has supported 1-3 graduate students and research fellows per year since 1988.

“As the Dean of the College of Engineering at the University of Kentucky, I would be pleased if the university were to recognize this distinguished scientist for a career whose contributions have reached far into our academic community and whose impact on the Aluminum industry is still being realized,” writes Dean Lester.

For his pioneering work that forever changed the aluminum industry and for his support of the University of Kentucky’s research initiatives, Mr. Platek is recommended for an Honorary Doctor of Science degree.