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Office of the President
March 4, 2008

Members, Board of Trustees:

HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS

Recommendation: that the Board of Trustees approve awarding the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters to Gifford Blyton, Doctor of Humanities to Paul Patton, Doctor of Humanities to Orlando “Tubby” Smith, and Doctor of Science to Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam.

Background: Pursuant to the Conditions of Merit for Honorary Degrees, the Joint Committee on Honorary Degrees has recommended to the Graduate Faculty and the University Senate that an honorary degree be awarded to Gifford Blyton, Paul Patton, Orlando “Tubby” Smith, and Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam. These three bodies have expressed their approval of the recommendation.

Biographical sketches of the recipients are attached.

Action taken: Approved Disapproved Other _____

Gifford Blyton
2008 Nominee for Recipient of Honorary Doctor of Letters

Dr. Gifford Blyton has a long and distinguished record of service to the University of Kentucky. He was a faculty member from 1948 until his retirement in 1975 and also served as the director of the highly regarded UK debate team, which won many honors under his direction. He co-founded the American Forensic Foundation in 1949 and later served as its president. In addition, he served as the Faculty Senate parliamentarian for thirty-five years, many of those after his official retirement, a feat unlikely to be equaled. After his retirement in 1975, Dr. Blyton also served as the director of the Kentucky High School Speech League.

Dr. Blyton was the recipient of the UK Great Teacher award in 1970, had an endowed chair established in his name in 2002, and was honored as a Friend of the College of Communications in 2004.

In the letter nominating Dr. Blyton for the honorary degree, his supporters note that the honorary degree will acknowledge “the outstanding service and love this great and generous man has provided during his long tenure and retirement years to the University of Kentucky.”

For these reasons, Dr. Gifford Blyton is recommended as a recipient of the 2008 Honorary Doctor of Letters degree.

Paul Patton
2008 Nominee for Recipient of Honorary Doctor of Humanities

Paul Patton, the 59th Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, has been a lifelong servant of this state and a great friend to the University of Kentucky. Governor Patton graduated from UK in 1959 with a degree in mechanical engineering and was highly successful in the coal business in his home county, Pike County, where he also served as the County Judge-Executive.

In 1997, Governor Patton called for a special legislative session on education reform and this session ultimately passed House Bill 1, the landmark Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997, which significantly improved the climate for higher education in Kentucky.

Under his leadership, state financial support for higher education increased substantially, utilizing an innovative new funding mechanism called the Research Challenge Trust Fund (RCTF), which matched gifts to UK with state dollars. As a result, between 1998 and 2005, UK increased its endowed chairs from 22 to 95, and the number of endowed professorships grew from 45 to 210.

In addition to his work within the Commonwealth, Governor Patton provided national leadership by serving as the chairman of Education Commission of the States in 1999 and the chair of the National Governors Association from July 2002 to August 2003.

For these reasons, Paul Patton is recommended as a recipient of the 2008 Honorary Doctor of Humanities degree.

Orlando “Tubby” Smith
2008 Nominee for Recipient of Honorary Doctor of Humanities

Orlando “Tubby” Smith, the 5th Head Basketball Coach of the University of Kentucky, has a long record of success as a coach, a mentor, and a teacher, winning the national NCAA title in 1998, five SEC championships, and serving as an assistant coach for the 2000 Olympic basketball team. As his nominators wrote in their letter of support, “Notwithstanding Tubby Smith’s legendary successes on the courts of athletic competition, it is the quality of selflessness and his humanitarian commitment off the court which sets him apart...”

In 1998 Coach Smith established the Tubby Smith Foundation to support underprivileged children. The foundation has donated more than \$2.3 million to 60 community projects over the last nine years. One of those community projects is Tubby’s Clubhouse – a program to help low-income and high-risk students develop technology skills. There have been 700 Lexington children graduate from computer classes since the program’s inception. The Tubby’s Clubhouse program was awarded the Outstanding Human Services Program by the Northern Kentucky Area Development District in 2007.

In 2001, Coach Smith received the United Way Donna and Tubby Smith Community Spirit Award (namesake and inaugural recipient). He was also named a Lifetime Ambassador for Education by the College of Education in 2002 and awarded the Lauren K. Weinberg Humanitarian Award from the Kentucky Council for Community and Justice in 2005.

For these reasons, Orlando “Tubby” Smith is recommended as a recipient of the 2008 Honorary Doctor of Humanities degree.

Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam
2008 Nominee for Recipient of Honorary Doctor of Science

Dr. Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam became the 11th President of India on July 25, 2002 and held that office until July 24, 2007. During his term as president, Dr. Kalam focused on the visionary task of transforming India into a developed nation by 2020. The Government of India has honored him with the nation's highest civilian honors: the Padma Bhushan in 1981; Padma Vibhushan in 1990; and the Bharat Ratna in 1997.

Dr. Kalam has also achieved international recognition for his professional work in the fields of science and engineering. He made significant contributions as Project Director to the development of India's first indigenous Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV-III), which successfully launched the Rohini satellite into near-earth orbit in July 1980. He was responsible for the evolution of ISRO's launch vehicle program, particularly the PSLV configuration. Dr. Kalam also served as the scientific adviser to the Defense Minister and Secretary, Department of Defense Research and Development from July 1992 to December 1999, and from November 1999 to November 2001 the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India.

For these reasons, Dr. Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam is recommended as a recipient of the 2008 Honorary Doctor of Science degree.