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# Honorary Degree Award Citation for Mary Poulson

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## Honorary Degree Awarded to Retiring Faculty

### Mary F. Poulson, Professor of Physical Education and Coordinator of the Recreation Center

"Mary Poulson, since arriving at Lawrence from Milwaukee-Downer in 1964, you have been the driving force behind the tennis and fencing programs at the college, as well as a teacher of hundreds of students in a variety of physical education programs. Your retirement marks the end of an era, as it were, since you are the last of the Downer faculty who came to Appleton at the merger. But this moment is also the end of another era, one that you personified in the combination of dignity and determination that you imparted to the Lawrentians whom you coached. You enabled their successes on the court and in combat, though regard for you prompts me to omit mention of your two years coaching basketball.

It has been through your remarkable efforts that Lawrence students have been able to compete as varsity fencers, and not just against the usual Midwest Conference suspects, but in the big leagues with Division I as well. What your fencers experienced in those contests is captured and conveyed by the words of one: 'Coach Poulson made fencing a part of Lawrence for many of us who would not have found our niche if it hadn't been for her. In the salle, we not only discovered fencing, we discovered ourselves, for when do you reveal more of yourself than when embracing victory or accepting defeat?' That testimony speaks volumes about your impact on generations of Lawrentians.

You have always excelled at inspiring, encouraging, and improving your students with grace, humor, understanding, and a remarkable sensitivity to the style of each individual. And your good advice, gentle counsel, and wry humor have sustained your athletes through many a tough competition. Finally, we can only suppose that some secret ambition to be a truck driver has sustained you throughout those long hours spent at the wheel of a van on the countless trips made with your teams. Although you may not miss spending those hours on the road, you will surely be missed on your home court.

By the authority vested in me, I now confer upon you the degree of Master of Arts, *ad eundem*, and admit you to its rights, its privileges, and its obligations."

*Citation read by President Richard Warch at Commencement, 1993*