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Honorary Degree Award Citation for J. Michael Hittle

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Honorary Degree Awarded to Retiring Faculty

J. Michael Hittle, David G. Ormsby Professor of History and Political Economy

"J. Michael Hittle, notwithstanding numerous 'collegial' attempts at arm-twisting, you insist--to the great dismay of your colleagues and students alike--on heading north at the sprightly young age of 63. History majors will probably best remember you from the Historiography course you crafted and introduced with Anne Schutte. That course has since become one of the College's most rigorous rites of passage and you have taught it many a time. I don't doubt, however, that most of its victims have long since forgiven you and recall it quite fondly. A smaller but still substantial subset of your students has known you through the courses on Russian and Byzantine history that you first introduced at Lawrence in the 1960s. The extraordinary breadth of these, which treated everything from the Varangian Guard to Soviet commissars, was surely unique for its time. In more recent years, you were instrumental in recasting the History Department's curriculum within a 'global' framework as opposed to the Western Civ paradigm of the post-war era. While that mission may not always have been entirely visible to some students, it was one of great importance to you and is now a task completed and a perspective embedded in the department's program.

Among your innumerable undertakings on behalf of the College, you certainly deserve great credit for helping to revitalize Freshman Studies during the late 1970s. Your stint as Director of the revived one-term course between 1978 and 1980 received much acclaim and helped bring about your promotion--if that is the fitting term--to academic administration. I and many of your colleagues remember and commend you as the long-suffering (excuse me, that should read long-serving) Dean of the Faculty, and eight-year stint in Sampson House, when you relinquished (sorry, that should be reaffirmed) your intellectual principles to serve as Lawrence's chief academic officer. As Dean from 1980 to 1988, you continued to promote the expansion of Freshman Studies into its current two-term form, helped craft and enact a revival of general education requirements, and oversaw the design and construction of the Wriston Art Center. Your other duties as assigned will not be remarked upon here.

On the personal side, you have long been among the great Nimrods of the faculty, and your love of fishing, hunting, and the outdoors is familiar to all who know you well; it is that love perhaps most of all that has seduced you into retirement. And finally, those aware of your proud Hoosier past, will not be surprised to hear of your lifelong passion for basketball. Indeed, some now present recall--or at least claim to recall--having actually sighted you at Alexander Gym in basketball shorts. Or perhaps that was Elvis.

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, 2001