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Honorary Degree Award Citation for Kenneth Sager

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Honorary Degree Awarded to Retiring Faculty

Kenneth R. Sager, Professor of Education

"Ken Sager, only 62 years ago you walked across this stage, a member of the Lawrence class of 1939. Now, it is altogether fitting and right that you stand on this stage to be honored by the students, your colleagues, this college, and the community you have so honorably served.

A. Bartlett Giamatti, when president of Yale University, wrote that 'A liberal education is at the heart of a civil society, and at the heart of a liberal education is the act of teaching.' In your 59 years as a classroom teacher--38 at Lawrence and 21 before that at Appleton West High School--you have demonstrated the truth of that statement, as generations of Lawrence students have been inspired by your example to become teachers and, in so doing, serve the public good.

Though you have expressed the wish to be allowed to 'just walk quietly away,' we cannot allow you to do so. Your kind and generous spirit, your warmth and gentle good nature, have endeared you to your students--even as they have made that long walk across College Avenue to attend one of your 8:00 AM classes.

In her novel *Fugitive Pieces*, the Canadian writer and poet Anne Michaels noted that 'The best teacher lodges an intent, not in the mind but in the heart.' In your creative and often seriously playful approach to the art and craft of teaching, in your striving to instill in your students the same curiosity and wonder with which you view the world, and in your unshakable faith in the dignity and worth of the teaching profession, you have indeed moved the hearts--as well as the minds--of your students. Most of all, you have given to your students the understanding that to ask 'why?' and even more, 'why not?' is what learning and teaching is ultimately about. And you have understood your students because, to quote from one of your annual reports, you not only remembered that you were young, but how.

Though Lawrence prides itself on the contributions it has made since its founding to the wellbeing of Appleton and the Fox Valley, very few Lawrentians have given as much to the community as you have: thirty-seven years, and counting, as a member of the Appleton School Board; director of your church choir for 55 years; member of the Outagamie County Museum Board; past president of the Hearthstone Board; founding member and president of Appleton's A Better Chance Program; and member of state and local committees, boards, and organizations too numerous to mention. In 1992 you even received the 'Most Wonderful Person' award from the Appleton Women's Club (only the second man to be so honored with an award for which I have ceaselessly campaigned). And along the way, you sang with the Lawrence Choral Society and played cello with the Lawrence Symphony Orchestra. All these efforts reflect splendidly on the liberal arts education you received and helped shape at the college.

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