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Honorary Degree Award Citation for Richard Warch

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Honorary Degree Awarded to Retiring Faculty

Richard Warch, fourteenth president of Lawrence University

"Richard Warch — RIK — you told each entering class of Lawrentians: 'Your business here is to learn,' and, just to make sure they remembered, you told them again as they were graduating. Now that you, in a sense, have graduated, we can look back and recognize that, for many people and in many ways, you have embodied Lawrence University, representing the best that it could be and the highest to which it could aspire. Your presidential portfolio was wide-ranging — from policing the grounds to leading two successful capital campaigns to articulating a profound, yet practical, vision for Björklunden to journeying to the Czech Republic to confer an honorary degree on Václav Havel.

You have quoted Jacques Barzun to the effect that a college president's job is to handle 'the trustees, the public, and the money...If, after his term of office, he has secured for the college a new gymnasium or library, he is held in as high esteem as if he had contributed an idea or an atmosphere.' In conferring this honor, we seek to make it clear that you have contributed to Lawrence more than a few ideas, along with an atmosphere in which teaching and learning were prized and promoted, civic and voluntary service were advocated and advanced, and the benefits of a residential liberal arts college were articulated and achieved. (You also infected many on the campus with your affection for alliteration.)

Saying that you do not wish to be remembered as a 'bricks and mortar' president, you have asserted that Lawrence on your watch exhibited no symptoms of an 'edifice complex.' Nevertheless, a chronicle of your service to Lawrence should not fail to note the six campus buildings erected during your presidency and the eight that were renovated — investments in academic infrastructure that either provided new spaces for faculty and students to do their work or added to the quality of life on the residential campus.

Justly known as a president who writes — and writes exceedingly well — you devoted generous measures of time and thought to your annual Matriculation Convocation addresses, which you have described as 'my thoughts about various aspects of how we engage each other in a residential liberal arts community.' Likewise, your introductions of speakers at University Convocations were well-researched and unfailingly well-received. At Reunion Weekend convocations, you engaged the alumni audience with humor and honesty. Indeed, for the alumni of Lawrence and the alumnae of Milwaukee-Downer, whether visiting them where they lived or welcoming them back to the campus, you have been a welcome guest and a trusted friend.

As the Vikings athletic teams' proudest fan and most enthusiastic booster, no one cheered louder or smiled more broadly when Lawrence student-athletes excelled. At the same time, you have been a thoughtful critic of some of the excesses of college and university athletic programs nationally.

Just as Freshman Studies is Nathan Pusey's lasting legacy — although you have played no small part in keeping it at the center of Lawrence's educational enterprise — one of your most important legacies is the weekend student seminar program at Björklunden and the establishment

of Björklunden as an integral part of the educational experience for Lawrence undergraduates. Contributions to a 'Thanks, Rik' fund for a Björklunden endowment have amply demonstrated that the excellence of your stewardship of the northern campus is both known and appreciated.

Moving on, in the year since your official retirement, you have been the recipient of the Campus Compact Presidential Civic Leadership Award and been appointed by Governor Jim Doyle to the state Ethics Board.

For all these reasons, and others too numerous to mention, it is a privilege for me to say these words that you have said so many times:

By the authority vested in me, I now confer upon you the degree Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, and admit you to its rights, its privileges, and its obligations."

Citation read by President Jill Beck at Commencement, 2005