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Lawrence University

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# Lawrence University Recognizes Russ Feingold with Honorary Degree at June Commencement

*Posted on: February 23rd, 2011 by Rick Peterson*

Lawrence University will recognize former U.S. Senator Russ Feingold with an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree Sunday, June 5 at the college's 162nd commencement. Feingold also will serve as the principal commencement speaker.



**Russ Feingold**

The Doctor of Humane Letters degree is in recognition of Russ Feingold's distinguished service to the state of Wisconsin and to the nation during his 28 years in public service to date. Feingold, 57, established himself as one of the U.S. Senate's most independent voices during his 18-year career there. He was the only senator to vote against the Patriot Act in 2001, opposed President Obama's decision to expand the war in Afghanistan, was the first senator to propose a timetable to exit Iraq and fought against financial deregulation and trade agreements like NAFTA he considered unfair. He lost his 2010 election bid for a fourth term to Oshkosh businessman Ron Johnson.

“Senator Feingold exemplifies the ‘responsible and meaningful citizenship’ that Lawrence University values, that is central to our

mission and that we would like our students to observe in action,” said Lawrence President Jill Beck. “As we celebrate the commencement of the Class of 2011, we are honored to be doing so with a thoughtful and humane leader who exemplifies integrity and independent thinking.”

Recognized as an effective legislator who worked across party lines on both domestic and foreign policy, Feingold is perhaps best known for his work on campaign finance reform. It resulted in the landmark Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act, better known as the McCain-Feingold bill, which he co-authored with Republican John McCain. As a senator, he served on the Senate Budget, Judiciary, Foreign Relations and Intelligence committees.

Earlier this year, Feingold accepted a visiting professor appointment at Marquette University Law School to teach the course “Current Legal Issues: The U.S. Senate.” In February, Feingold announced the formation of Progressives United, a grassroots political action committee to counter corporate influence in politics. The organization will support candidates while serving as a media and political watchdog.

Feingold graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1975 and earned a law degree in 1977 from Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar. He returned to the states and earned a law degree from Harvard Law School in 1979. Feingold practiced law in Madison from 1979-85.

A native of Janesville, Feingold first ran for public office in 1982, winning a seat in the Wisconsin State Senate. He was re-elected in 1986 and 1990 before successfully running for the U.S. Senate in 1992, defeating two-term incumbent Republican Robert Kasten.

As a U.S. Senator, Feingold made a point of visiting each of Wisconsin’s 72 counties annually to conduct “listening sessions”

with voters. This approach was one example of Feingold's honest desire to represent his state with respect for all of its citizens.