

## **104. Honorary Degrees and Recognition**

The Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama historically has awarded honorary degrees to or named property or programs for persons on whom it wishes to confer its highest honors based on major contributions or outstanding accomplishments in their fields of endeavor. In order to preserve the prestige and high honor of these recognitions, the Board of Trustees deems it desirable to state its general policies and procedures for the awarding of honorary degrees, and the naming of its academic programs, buildings, and other properties.

### **I. Policy**

#### **A. Honorary Degrees**

Recipients of honorary degrees should be restricted to those persons outstanding in their contributions or service: (1) to The University of Alabama System or to one of the System institutions; (2) to their state, nation, or the international community; or (3) in their profession or fields of endeavor. Contributions shall include cultural, scientific, economic, or humanitarian activity. The number of honorary degrees awarded shall be limited in number and restricted to persons of genuine distinction.

#### **B. Naming of Buildings**

Campus and other University-owned buildings or major portions thereof, other structures, streets and geographic areas will be named by the Board when recognition is desired for honoring or memorializing individuals who have made major contributions to or performed outstanding services for The University of Alabama System or one of the System institutions.

Individuals who are currently professionally active or who have been inactive for less than three years will not be recognized in this way unless they qualify under the minimum standards section (III.A.8.) of Board Rule 411. This includes active University staff members, elected officeholders, and other individuals of distinction. In all cases, except as outlined below, the Board shall approve in advance the names of individuals to be so recognized.

In the event, however, that one of the System institutions wishes to undertake a plan of fund raising in which definable portions of a specific building would be given donors' names through campus administrative action, the Board of Trustees may approve such plan in its entirety in advance. In such instances, a list of donors so recognized shall be returned to the Board upon completion of the fund-raising campaign, for the purpose of maintaining a permanent historical record.

It should be recognized that the Board has a development policy which specifies that no donor shall have a building named in his or her honor unless he or she has contributed at least fifty-one percent (51%) of the cost thereof, as stipulated in Board Rule 411. This policy shall be followed unless the Board finds special need for making an exception, particularly when the person is not being recognized solely for the donation.

C. Naming of Programs

Academic, research, or service programs may be named by the Board for individuals to honor, memorialize, or recognize those individuals. Selection of such individuals will be made based on factors developed by the Honorary Degrees and Recognition Committee, including: significant endowed financial contributions, according to standards outlined in Board Rule 411; outstanding service to the state, nation, or world; or outstanding achievement in a field of endeavor that relates to the program being named. Individuals who are currently professionally active or who have been inactive for less than three years will not be recognized in this way unless they qualify under the minimum standards section (III.A.9.) of Board Rule 411. This includes active University staff members, elected officeholders, and other individuals of distinction. In all cases, except as outlined below, the Board shall approve in advance the names of individuals to be so recognized.

Under current Board policy, a program shall not be named for a donor because of a financial contribution unless the donor has contributed the greater of \$5 million or an endowment that should generate twenty percent (20%) of the current annual operating cost of that school, college, or division. The Board may make exceptions to this minimum level in special circumstances where, for example, the person is not being recognized solely for the donation.

II. Procedures

The Bylaws of the Board of Trustees (herein called Board) provide for an Honorary Degrees and Recognition Committee (herein called Committee).

A. Honorary Degrees

1. Procedures for Recommending Honorees

The Committee shall actively seek persons who meet the criteria stated in Section I.A. above, and shall attempt to provide balance within the categories of contribution or service set forth. Nominations of potential recipients of honorary degrees may be made by any Trustee, by the Chancellor or by a President. Recommendations from the campuses shall be made through the appropriate President.

Nominations shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Board at least 30 days prior to the Board of Trustees meeting at which the Committee recommends approval. The Secretary shall promptly forward nominations to all Trustees, including those on the Committee, to the Chancellor, and to all Presidents. Submissions shall include biographical information on the nominee, together with an explanation of and justification for the proposed award, and designation of which institution of the System would award the degree.

If the Committee recommends approval of a nominee, his or her name shall be presented to the entire Board for approval. Approval by the entire Board is needed before the honorary degree may be awarded. No nominee shall be notified about his or her candidacy prior to approval by the entire Board.

If an honorary degree has not been granted within two years of approval by the Board, the name may be put before the Committee once more, so that the Committee may review updated information about the nominee. Then, if the Committee recommends, the name must be resubmitted to the Board for reapproval before the degree may be awarded.

2. Awarding the Honorary Degree

Once the entire Board has approved a nominee, the degree shall be awarded at a commencement exercise held by the institution awarding the degree, within two years of Board approval. The President shall be joined by a Trustee, to be designated by the President Pro Tem of the Board, at the ceremony, in the presentation of the honorary degree. The President of the institution at which the degree is to be awarded shall be responsible for preparation of citations and

diplomas for honorary degrees. Diplomas shall follow the form attached as Attachment A.

3. Number of Awards

Each institution may award up to three (3) honorary degrees per calendar year.

No individual may receive a lifetime total of more than one (1) honorary degree from The Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama.

4. Type of Degrees

The type of each honorary degree to be awarded shall be determined by the Board, after consultation with the Chancellor and the President of the appropriate institution, with degrees normally being limited to the following:

- Doctor of Laws (LL.D.)
- Doctor of Science (D. Sc.)
- Doctor of Humane Letters (L.H.D.)
- Doctor of Humanities (D. Humanities)
- Doctor of Letters (Litt. D.)
- Master of Arts, Honorary (M.A., Hon.)
- Master of Science, Honorary (M.Sc., Hon.)

B. Naming of Buildings and Programs

The Committee shall actively seek persons to be recognized by having buildings, geographic areas, or programs named in their honor. It shall consider nominations by Trustees, the Chancellor and Presidents of the institutions and shall consider recommendations from the general public through one of said officials. Recommendations from the campuses shall be made through the appropriate President.

Proposals for naming honors shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Board at least 30 days prior to the Board of Trustees meeting at which the Committee recommends approval. The Secretary shall promptly forward proposals to all Trustees, including those on the Committee, to the Chancellor, and to all Presidents.

Submissions shall include biographical information on the proposed honoree, together with an explanation of and justification for the proposed honor.

If the Committee recommends approval of a proposed naming of a building or program, the proposal shall be presented to the entire Board for approval. Approval by the entire Board is needed before a building- or program-naming honor may be conferred. No honoree shall be notified about his or her proposed honor prior to approval by the entire Board.

If the proposed building- or program-naming honor has not been conferred within two years of approval by the Board, the naming proposal may be put before the Committee once more, so that the Committee may review updated information about the proposed honoree. Then, if the Committee recommends, the name must be resubmitted to the Board for reapproval before the naming honor may be conferred.

C. Notification of Trustee Actions

The Secretary of the Board shall notify the Chancellor, in writing, of the action of the Board of Trustees approving the awarding of honorary degrees or naming of buildings, geographic areas, or programs immediately after such action is taken by the Board, and the Chancellor shall either notify such honoree of the action or give written authorization to the President of the appropriate institution to notify the honoree of such action.

D. Naming by Presidents

The Presidents have authority to name any building or structure or any portion thereof, streets, geographic areas, and academic, research, and service programs which: (1) shall not be named for individuals; (2) have not been named by the Board; and (3) are named according to their use or function or some general descriptive purpose.

(Adopted May 14, 1977 as Committee Guidelines; amended May 19, 1982; February 3, 1983; June 26, 1986; June 22, 1990; amended and adopted as Board Rule December 5, 1997; amended September 18, 1998; April 19, 2002; November 7, 2003.)

**Attachment A to Board Rule 104**

The Board of Trustees  
of  
The University of Alabama

has awarded to

the degree of

Honoris Causa

with all the rights, privileges and honors thereunto

appertaining.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, this Diploma is issued with the Seal of  
the Board and the signatures authorized by the Trustees hereunto  
affixed.

Conferred at The University of Alabama (at Birmingham)(in Huntsville)

on this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ .

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Governor of Alabama, President  
The Board of Trustees of  
The University of Alabama

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Chancellor  
The University of Alabama System

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President,  
The University of  
Alabama

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President,  
The University of  
Alabama at Birmingham

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President,  
The University of  
Alabama in Huntsville