

**Agendum
Oakland University
Board of Trustees Formal Session
August 13, 2018**

**APPROVAL OF HONORARY DEGREE FOR JAYNE HOUDYSHELL
A Recommendation**

1. **Division and Department:** Academic Affairs, Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.

2. **Introduction:** In accordance with Article IX of the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees, honorary degrees may be awarded by the Board of Trustees in recognition of distinguished accomplishment and service within the scope of the arts and letters, sciences, professions, and public service as recognized and supported by the University. The awarding of honorary degrees reaffirms Oakland University's scholarly, creative, and humanitarian values and ties the University to the community at large.

Jayne Houdyshell is an award-winning actress and alumna of the Academy of Dramatic Arts at Oakland University. Graduating with honors in 1974, Houdyshell has enjoyed a successful forty-year career appearing in hundreds of productions around the world and has won acclaim for her excellent work.

Houdyshell has achieved significant personal success in the theatre. She received the 2016 Tony Award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Feature Role in a Play for her portrayal of Dierdre Blake in *The Humans* by Stephen Karam. The New York Times called out Houdyshell for her acting skills commenting on her timing, flair for comedy, sophisticated understanding of a script and her ability to "disappear into any role." She was also nominated for her work in Lucas Hnath's play, *A Doll's House, Part 2* in 2017, for her portrayal of Hattie Walker in James Goldman and Stephen Sondheim's musical, *Follies* in 2012 and for her work in Lisa Kron's play, *Well* in 2006. In addition to her Tony nominations, Houdyshell has received two Drama Desk Awards, a Theatre World Award, and a Joseph Jefferson Award among others.

Houdyshell has also extended her work to television and film. In television she has appeared on *Law & Order*, *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, *Third Watch*, *The Good Wife* and *The Good Fight*. She has also appeared in the films *Everybody's Fine*, *Trust the Man*, *Garden State*, *Changing Lanes* and more recently *The Chaperone*.

Houdyshell began her acting career as a teenager. At the age of 14, she wrote what she terms a "manifesto" justifying why she wanted to act. She believed she could "make people feel something that was meaningful to them," and to achieve her goal, left her Topeka, Kansas home to attend Oakland University. In 2007, she was honored by the then Department of Music, Theatre and Dance with an Alumni Achievement in Theatre MaTiLDa Award. At that time, Houdyshell was playing Madame Morrible in *Wicked* but took the time to videotape her acceptance.

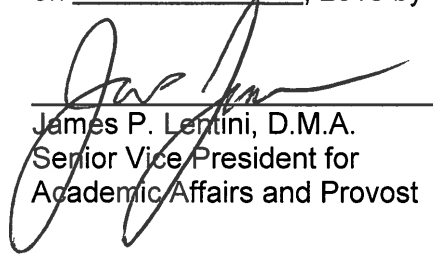
Houdyshell started her career in regional theatre and started one of her own in Garrison, Iowa. She played more than 200 different roles in regional theatre before she began the process of "making it" in New York City. In a recent interview she stated, "I still love theater in the same way as I did when I was 14. Humanity fascinates me, human nature fascinates me. I never get tired of stepping into someone else's shoes and figuring out what makes them tick. That responsibility to connect with the audience still stimulates me."

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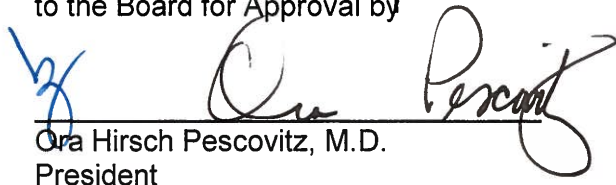
Kevin Corcoran and Jackie Wiggins, Houdyshell's nominators, stated that she "is the personification of the humanitarian and creative values conferred by an honorary degree." They further note that "Houdyshell has remained an engaged member of the Oakland University family...and through her accomplishments, attitude, and magnanimity, she handily meets and exceeds the standards of "special merit befitting of an honorary degree." The Honorary Degree Committee concurs and recommends Jayne Houdyshell receive the honorary degree: Doctor of Arts Honoris Causa.

3. **Previous Board Action:** The Board of Trustees periodically awards honorary degrees at its Formal Sessions.
4. **Budget Implications:** None.
5. **Educational Implications:** The awarding of honorary degrees is an established tradition in academe, by which the University reaffirms its scholarly, creative, and humanitarian values and its ties to the wider community.
6. **Personnel Implications:** None.
7. **University Reviews/Approvals:** The Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost has recommended approval of the recipient to receive an Honorary Degree.
8. **Recommendation:** RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees awards the honorary degree of Doctor of Arts *Honoris Causa* to Jayne Houdyshell.
9. **Attachments:** None.

Submitted to the President
on 8/9, 2018 by


James P. Lentini, D.M.A.
Senior Vice President for
Academic Affairs and Provost

Recommended on 8/10, 2018
to the Board for Approval by


Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, M.D.
President