

**Agendum
Oakland University
Board of Trustees Formal Session
February 7, 2019**

**APPROVAL OF HONORARY DEGREE FOR DAVID MCMILLAN
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.

David McMillan is a well-known artist of exceptional merit. Born in Dundee, Scotland in 1945, he immigrated to the United States in 1951 and became a naturalized citizen at 14. He received his master of Fine Arts degree at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1973 and immediately accepted a position at the University of Manitoba where he established the photography program in the School of Art. Now retired from his teaching position, he remains a Senior Scholar at the university.

McMillan has had 30 solo exhibitions since 1980, in addition to two person and group exhibitions and 60 selected publications, including catalogs for such major surveys as Photography in Canada, 1960-2000 (National Gallery of Canada, 2017), Camera Atomica (Art Gallery of Ontario, 2015), and Shine a Light: Canadian Biennial, 2014 (National Gallery of Canada, 2014). His work has been featured internationally with showings in Hong Kong, Yugoslavia, Iceland, Finland, Israel, Australia, China, Germany, and the USA, including most recently Oakland University Art Gallery. He has been invited as a visiting artist or speaker at the Exposure Festival in Canmore Alberta, Helsinki Photography Biennial, Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Icelandic Academy of the Arts, Reykjavik, Yale University School of Art, and the Hong Kong Arts Center to name a few. He has received grants and awards from the Canada Council, Winnipeg Arts Council, Manitoba Arts Council, and Banff Centre's Barbara Spohr Award.

Some of his most important work has focused on the exclusion zone surrounding Chernobyl. This zone encompasses 30 kilometers and was intended to prevent exposure to radiation. Within the zone are numerous communities as well as the city of Pripyat that was built to accommodate Chernobyl's workers and their families. All were permanently evacuated. McMillan became intrigued after seeing a story by Alan Weisman in Harpers "Journey Through a Doomed Land: Exploring Chernobyl's Still-Deadly ruins," (1994). McMillan, a child of the cold war, was determined to see the site for himself. By October 1994, McMillan was one of the first artists to gain access to "The Zone," where he has since journeyed twenty-one times. This dedication to bear witness to the Chernobyl aftermath is both unprecedented and unparalleled. His commitment to documenting the profound mutation of Chernobyl and its surroundings over a quarter of a century is noteworthy. The body of work that has resulted from his journeys within the zone documents nature's remarkable capacity to endure and recover from a catastrophe as pernicious as Chernobyl. Returning year after year enabled McMillan to revisit the sites of earlier photographs, thereby underscoring the inexorable forces of nature reclaiming the abandoned community.

McMillan's Chernobyl series are moving and are soon to be the subject of a major book to be published by Gerhard Steidl, the foremost publisher of photobooks worldwide. Claude Baillargeon, Associate Professor of Art at Oakland University has authored this text. The exhibition premiering at the Oakland University Art Gallery has sparked significant interest and collaborations within Metropolitan Detroit.

David McMillan has established a record of outstanding achievements in academe and art by virtue of his many recognitions and high productivity. His work of 25 years documenting the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone is but one of his many artistic contributions. It reminds us of humankind's power to destroy, but nature's ultimate ability to heal and conquer human folly. David McMillan has contributed to humankind's intellectual, cultural and aesthetic betterment and is deserving of the honorary degree Doctor of Humanities Honoris Causa.

3. **Previous Board Action:** The Board of Trustees periodically awards honorary degrees at its Formal Sessions.

4. **Budget Implications:** None.

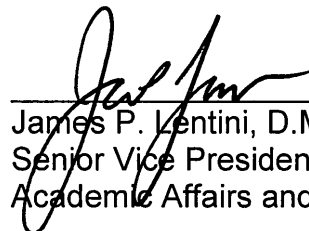
5. **Educational Implications:** The awarding of honorary degrees is an established tradition in academe, by which the University reaffirms its scholarly, creative, and humanitarian values and its ties to the wider community.

6. **Personnel Implications:** None.

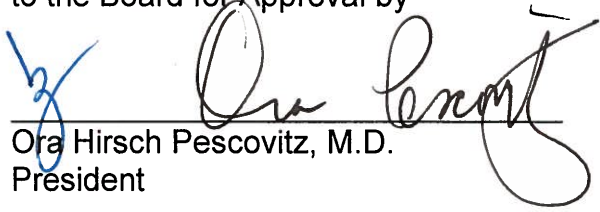
7. **University Reviews/Approvals:** The Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost has recommended approval of the recipient to receive an Honorary Degree.
8. **Recommendation** RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees awards the honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities *Honoris Causa* to David McMillan.
9. **Attachments:** None.

Submitted to the President

on 2/5, 2019 by


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

Recommended on 2/5, 2019
to the Board for Approval by


Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, M.D.
President