

**Agendum
Oakland University
Board of Trustees Formal Session
August 12, 2021**

**APPROVAL OF HONORARY DEGREE FOR MICHAEL KENNY
A Recommendation**

1. **Division and Department:** Academic Affairs, Office of the Executive 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.

Michael Kenny credits Oakland University and his liberal studies education for creating a foundation of skills and curiosity that lead to the success he has today. After graduating magna cum laude as a triple major in philosophy, history and political science here at OU, Mr. Kenny received a fellowship from Northwestern University where he earned a graduate degree before completing his law degree at Emory School of Law in Atlanta, Georgia.

Mr. Kenny is a partner at the law firm of Alston & Bird in Atlanta, Georgia. He is a highly respected trial and appellate lawyer with a national practice, securing jury verdicts and settlements of more than \$1 billion, and successfully defending clients, helping them to avoid more than \$20 billion in liability. Mr. Kenny has served as lead appellate counsel in 40 federal and state courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court and 11 federal circuit courts of appeal. His talent as a lawyer has landed him on several prominent lists including the Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business, Best Lawyers in America, and Georgia Super Lawyers. Mr. Kenny has served two terms on Alston & Bird's Management Committee.

To ensure hardworking and dedicated students receive the same opportunities he did as an undergraduate student, Mr. Kenny began significantly contributing to the Undergraduate Research in Science Gift Fund - a fund that supports undergraduate science students during summer research projects with OU faculty members. Mr. and Mrs. Kenny were impressed by the university's research program and the opportunities

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it provided students. To maintain support for students in the sciences, they generously donated \$100,000 to endow the Michael P. and Elizabeth A. Kenny Merit Scholarship for the Sciences in 2012. They continue to donate this amount to the endowment annually. Their intent is to attract the best and brightest students to OU and to help them reach their full potential.

Mr. Kenny explained in a 2016 OU Magazine article that he and his wife, created the scholarship at OU "... in the hopes of helping high-achieving science students in two ways: We wanted to help OU attract and retain excellent students and we wanted to honor these students with a title that reflected their merit By creating the scholarship, we hope that terrifically talented young men and women will be able to pursue their intellectual passions and enhance the reputation of OU."

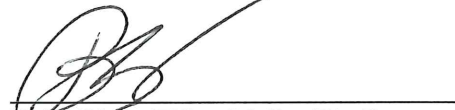
The determination Mr. Kenny showed as a student continues through his career and now fuels his desire to give back to his alma mater. Through his scholarship, Mr. Kenny has left his mark on the University as it attracts the brightest minds for generations to come. He is a shining example of a successful, dedicated alumnus and his professional achievements make him an ideal candidate for an honorary degree.

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 Executive 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 Michael Kenny.

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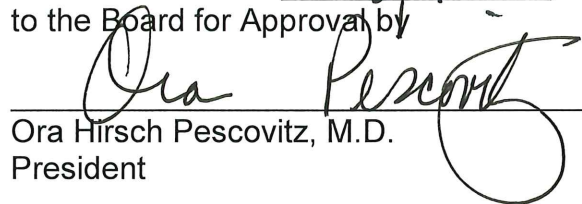
9. Attachments: None.

Submitted to the President
on 8/4/21, 2021 by



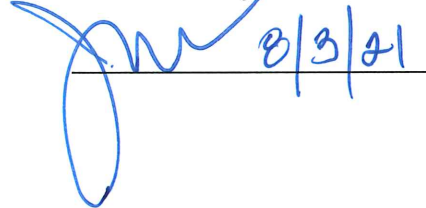
Britt Rios-Ellis, M.S., Ph.D.
Executive Vice President for
Academic Affairs and Provost

Recommended on 8/9, 2021
to the Board for Approval by



Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, M.D.
President

Reviewed by



8/3/21