

**Agendum
Oakland University
Board of Trustees Formal Session
September 11, 2023**

**APPROVAL OF HONORARY DEGREE FOR WALTER AND DONNA YOUNG
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.

Mr. and Mrs. Young truly demonstrate the high level of achievement and service this award is meant to recognize, as evidenced by the Youngs' remarkable mutual commitment to Oakland University via their long history of support and leadership, their significant endowment for study abroad, their connection to the Honors College student recipients, and their impressive journey in business, community involvement and local and international leadership. It cannot be overstated how intertwined their lives' work has been and how much of a combined effort, passion and commitment they have had for Oakland University.

Mr. Young earned a bachelor of arts in economics and history from Muskingum College in Ohio in 1966, which is where he met Donna. He went on to receive his MBA from Penn State in 1968. He started an accomplished career with multiple international positions in the tire industry as he worked his way up through the business. He served as VP at BF Goodrich Company, Worldwide Tire Group, and Budd Company before moving on to Group President of the Henley Project, Chairman & CEO of Redman Industries, Inc., and President of Homes America, Inc., and finally to his pinnacle role as CEO of Champion Industries.

Champion was on the brink of bankruptcy, and in less than 12 years, Mr. Young positioned it as the world's largest home builder, ranked in the Fortune 500. He partnered Champion with the US Department of Energy and Housing and Urban Development to improve quality, maintain affordability and enhance energy efficiency of manufactured housing.

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Mr. Young was named one of the world's 1,000 most influential business leaders of the past 100 years by the Harvard University Press publication "In Their Time: The Greatest Business Leaders of the Twentieth Century." He was also recognized as a "superstar" by Fortune Magazine and named Industry Person of the Year for three consecutive years. In total, Mr. Young led 23 organizational turnarounds and 75 mergers and acquisitions in domestic and international manufacturing industries.

Since 2003, Mr. Young has focused on entrepreneurial start-ups, leading and assisting more than 80 entities to raise over \$100 million in capital. His community affiliations are vast, with him serving on the boards of directors of multiple organizations, as an advisor, chairman and trustee—at least 16 community posts in all.

Mrs. Young received her bachelor of arts degree from Muskingum College in 1966 with plans to teach. She began a career in teaching and then started a family in early 1969, raising two successful children with heavy involvement in the community, including the schools and other community organizations. She has served as secretary and treasurer of the Young Foundation, supporting a variety of organizations. Donna was also a founding member of Women & Philanthropy at Oakland University and has remained involved since its inception. She has been a true partner with Walt in supporting Oakland University and his successful career.

The Youngs became involved with Oakland University in 1997, when Mr. Young joined the OU Foundation Board and when he and Mrs. Young made their first gift to OU. Mr. Young served as a member of OU's Foundation from 1997-2006, and he's also been involved in Keeper of the Dream and in planning multiple campaigns at OU.

The Youngs' continued connection with Oakland University has been with the Honors College through the Young Study Abroad Scholarship, which was established in 2004. The Youngs have contributed over \$800,000 to OU, with most of their support going to this healthy endowment, which will award approximately \$35,000 in study abroad scholarships to Honors College students in 2023. Over the lifetime of this scholarship, a total of 131 Honors College students have received scholarships totaling more than \$200,000 in support, enabling them to travel to every corner of the world. The Youngs truly believe in the transformative power of travel and enjoy hearing all about OU Honors College students' experiences.

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The impact of Mr. and Mrs. Young's leadership and service has made a permanent impact on industry and continues to make an impact on society through their charitable foundation and through their direct investment in Oakland University Honors College students, to literally show them the world. The Youngs are a power couple with hearts, giving back frequently and generously.

The Youngs have made their mark on the world, distinguished in business, philanthropy, and as an active part of OU's history and future.

It is our suggestion, with your approval, that Walter and Donna Young be awarded Doctor of Arts *honoris causa* from the SEHS and SBA at the 2:00 PM ceremony on Friday, December 15, 2023. Should you determine that a more appropriate (different) degree be awarded, or at a different ceremony, the Honorary Degree Committee supports your recommendation (without further review).

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 Walter and Donna Young.

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9. Attachments: None.

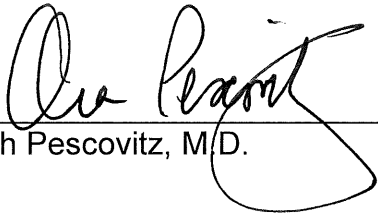
Submitted to the President

on 9/8, 2023 by



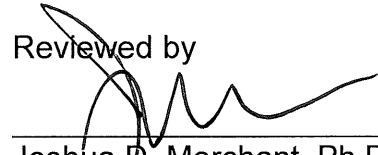
Britt Rios-Ellis, M.S., Ph.D.
Executive Vice President for
Academic Affairs and Provost

Recommended on 9/8, 2023
to the Board for Approval by



Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, M.D.
President

Reviewed by



Joshua D. Merchant, Ph.D.
Chief of Staff and
Secretary to the Board of Trustees