Freeman Hrabowski III Citation

May 22, 2006

Freeman A. Hrabowski III
Doctor of Humane Letters

Critical thinker, mathematician, and gifted scholar, you, Freeman A. Hrabowski III, continuously strive to nurture academic excellence and profoundly raise the standard of American education so that all students are academically prepared to compete internationally.

Born in Birmingham, Alabama, you graduated from Hampton Institute with highest honors in mathematics at the age of 19; at 24, you earned a doctorate in higher education administration (educational statistics) from the University of Illinois. You quickly made your mark in academia, serving as professor, dean, and academic vice president.

You were appointed vice provost of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), in 1987, executive vice president in 1990, and president in 1992. You launched the Meyerhoff Scholars program at UMBC in 1988 to identify, recruit, and train the nation's top aspiring African-American male scientists, engineers, and mathematicians. You then capitalized on the program's success by expanding it to include students of all races and genders. Today, UMBC competes with the nation's premier universities for top high school seniors.

As president of UMBC, you have tirelessly worked to position the university as a change agent in Maryland and the nation. You promote economic development through research, technology commercialization, and solid partnerships with the corporate and public sectors. Under your stewardship, UMBC is building a robust endowment. Acknowledging your success and profound impact in Maryland, you were selected as the 1999 "Marylander of the Year" by the editors of the Baltimore Sun.

In 2002, Fast Company Magazine, a publication devoted to showcasing creative people and innovative organizations that are shaping the future, featured you as one of the nation's "Fast 50 Champions of Innovation" in business and technology. You have coauthored two acclaimed books, Beating the Odds: Raising Academically Successful African American Males and Overcoming the Odds: Raising Academically Successful African American Young Women. Both are used nationally by universities, school systems, community groups, and parents.

By serving as a consultant to the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, and university and school systems nationally, and by sitting on numerous boards, including, for example, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Marguerite Casey Foundation, which you chair, you selflessly lend your expertise and passion for strengthening the academic achievement of all children and increasing diversity throughout our culture.
Over the years, your accomplishments have been celebrated prominently with awards and recognition, including your election to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and as a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, your receipt of the prestigious McGraw Prize in Education, and your acceptance of both the esteemed U.S. Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring and an honorary doctor of letters from Duke University. A child-leader in the Civil Rights Movement, you were prominently featured in Spike Lee's 1997 documentary Four Little Girls, an account of the racially motivated bombing of Birmingham's Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in 1963.

For your steadfast dedication to Pace's motto of Opportunitas in creating opportunities to elevate academic achievement and increase and diversify access to education, and for your contributions to enhancing the landscape of higher education, Pace University is honored to confer upon you the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa, with all the rights and privileges pertaining thereunto.

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