Wilkes University
Commencement, May 20, 2000
Citation for the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Humane Letters
WARREN D. EVANS

Warren Evans, you were born and reared in Ebensburg, Pennsylvania, a town founded by your great, great, great, great grandfather. Like many of our students today, you worked your way through college, earning a bachelor's degree at Indiana State Teachers College. You then served for two years during the Korean War as Instructor and Head Librarian in the 24th Division Libraries of the U.S. Army in both the United States and Korea. The Monday after your discharge from the Army, you began teaching in Ebensburg next to teachers who had taught you and other members of your family. From these beginnings you have devoted your life to education. Earning your master's degree at Towson State College and then your doctorate in higher education at Pennsylvania State University, followed by a postdoctoral internship at Shippensburg State College, you served as a faculty member for four years at Washington and Jefferson College in Southwest Pennsylvania.

Then began an extraordinary career with the Pennsylvania State Department of Education in Harrisburg. You were first called upon to revise the State Board of Education's regulations governing the approval of colleges, universities, and seminaries. For the last thirty-two years, while you have assumed responsibility for assuring the public quality of higher education institutions in the Commonwealth, this approval process for new and changing colleges and universities has been central to your responsibilities. Your several formal titles indicate the range of your service to Pennsylvanians: Director of Collegiate Approvals; Research Unit Liaison to Postsecondary Institutions; Chartering-Governance-Accreditation Specialist in the Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education of the Department of Education. Added to these duties in 1988 was your appointment by the Governor as Executive Director of the Professional Standards and Practices Commission with oversight over all teachers and certificates for teaching in the Commonwealth.

Appointing teams of professional educators and other representatives of the public interest to visit and ascertain the quality of new institutions seeking accreditation or major new degree programs seeking approval, you have presided over the efforts to increase the quality of postsecondary education in Pennsylvania for more than three decades. Performing this work you have come to know key faculty and administrators in all parts of the Commonwealth and perhaps have a better knowledge of the more than 100 colleges and universities in this state than any other living person. In the course of this life of dedication to the students of this Commonwealth, you have quite literally been the midwife to new and changing institutions. During more than 125 evaluations of collegiate institutions, you have been responsible for taking fourteen to university status (including Wilkes), eighteen to four-year college status, six to two-year junior college status, eight to be seminaries, thirty-five to graduate and professional status, three new branch campuses and for granting twenty-five out-of-state institutions the authority to operate in Pennsylvania.

Within six weeks you will have been married forty years to your beloved wife, Faynelle, with whom you produced and raised two children, Lacy Edith and John Charles. You now also have a granddaughter, Hayley Nell, to enjoy.

You have been the architect or editor and implementer of much of the state policy on higher education promulgated during your career as well as the chief watchdog to protect the citizens of this state from such abuses as degree mills. During your long career and in your own quiet, careful, methodical way, you have done more over a longer period of time than any other individual to assure the quality of education in Pennsylvania. On this day when we graduate our first Doctors of Pharmacy in a program you helped guide to state approval in its earliest phases, it is a pleasure for me by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Board of Trustees and by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to confer upon you, Warren Evans, the degree Doctor of Humane Letters, Honoris Causa, with all the rights and privileges appertaining thereto.