Raphael J. Musto, one of the most effective preservers of the natural environment in the Commonwealth and a true public servant of your 14th Senatorial District, the meeting of your constituents' needs continues to provide you with your greatest satisfaction. Born and raised in Pittston Township to James and Rose Frushon Musto, you drew from your family your orientation for politics and for public service. Graduating from high school in 1946 and serving in the U.S. Army in Europe for two years, you came home and helped run the Musto's small grocery store, Perfecting your skills as a butcher. Your father, a member of the United Mine Workers and an ardent advocate for the working man, added barbering to his skills to help support his large family. Just as you returned from Europe, he was elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives where he served for 24 years. His constituents sought his help and his home was his office. You learned early the importance of helping people who came to the family kitchen at dinnertime, often on Sunday, to seek your father's assistance. James Musto was one of the pioneers, working with Congressman Dan Flood, in securing help for victims of black lung disease. When he died in 1971, you succeeded him in the House of Representatives by winning a special election and continued his tradition of unstinting service to your constituents on even the smallest item. You served in Harrisburg until 1980, when Congressman Flood's resignation tempted you to run in the special election to succeed him as the representative from the 11th Congressional District in Washington. During your brief term in the Congress you served on two committees that reflected interests of yours that continue to this day: the Education and Labor Committee and the Subcommittee on Health and Safety.

By the time you began your political career in 1971, you and your wife Frances Panzetta Musto, already had produced a family of four children: James, Raphael, Jr., Michael and Frances Ann. Moreover, after several years of attending night classes at King's College, you earned that same year a bachelor's degree in Accounting. After being elected to succeed your father in the Pennsylvania House, you were re-elected to four consecutive terms. Following your loss of the Congressional seat in the Reagan landslide of 1980, you ran in 1982 for the Pennsylvania Senate seat in the 14th Senatorial District to succeed the late Martin Murray. In the intervening years you have been re-elected four times and are a recognized leader both in the Democratic Party and in the Pennsylvania Senate.

You have been an unusually active lawmaker, being the prime sponsor or co-sponsor of legislation on virtually every topic that fits the scope of state government. But it is the environment that has received your special attention and devotion which, coming from a district that continues to suffer the aftermath of the industrial era, particularly from anthracite coal mining, seems altogether appropriate. You serve as the Democratic Chair of the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee and as Vice Chair of the Joint Legislative Air, Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee. In 1988 you were a prime sponsor of the Pennsylvania Curbside Recycling Program, now the largest in the United States. In 1992 you took the initiative to secure passage of the Commonwealth's amendments to the federal Clean Air Act, known as the Air Pollution Control Act. You were a leading proponent of the Environmental Education Program for school students in 1993, the first in the nation. You have also shaped legislation dealing with abandoned mine reclamation, acid mine drainage and brownfields reclamation. An update on ways of dealing with all of these challenges is contained in the recently passed "Growing Greener" legislation which you helped steer through the Senate. Membership on Pennsylvania's 21st Century Environment Commission to shape future environmental policy, on the PENNVEST Authority Board, on the Environmental Quality Board, on the Low-Level Waste Advisory Committee and on the State Parks and Forestry Foundation Board, in addition to
chairing the Wild Resource Conservation Board, further demonstrate this abiding commitment to vouchsafe the natural environment to our grandchildren in better shape than we received it.

The awards for your leadership are virtually flowing in. In 1998 you were selected to be among those accepting a national award, the “Innovations in Government Award” from the Ford Foundation and Harvard University, for Pennsylvania's Land Recycling Program which you helped design. Also in 1998, the Susquehanna River Basin Commission presented you with their "Excellence in Environmental Stewardship Award." You had already in 1993 been given the "Outstanding Service to Environmental Education Award" from the Pennsylvania Alliance for Environmental Education. Finally, on this coming April 18 you will receive from the Pennsylvania Wildlife Federation an award as the "Conservation Legislator of the Year 2000."

You also serve on the Appropriations, Finance, Rules, Intergovernmental Affairs, Policy and Executive Nominations committees which taken together puts you at the crossroads of legislation and budgeting for the Commonwealth. But your service must be seen in your highly focused efforts to help your district. The securing of Rail Transport in Luzerne County, of the new Exit 46, of the new Arena, of the signs for the colleges and universities along I-81 (which you and Senator Lemmond helped get approved) are just a few recent examples of how service to your constituents remains uppermost in your definition of your responsibilities. Like your parents' kitchen on a Sunday, your district office on a Saturday is like a doctor's office filled with patients awaiting treatment. Your constituents know that you, like your father before you, are ready to help them on the most personal of matters. "Make them feel right," has remained for you the best policy and the best politics. One only has to attend the annual Senator Musto breakfast at the Pittston Convention Center with more than one thousand in attendance to know how this personal equation has been and remains the signature of your leadership.

It is a pleasure to recognize this career of public service. By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Board of Trustees of Wilkes University and by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hereby bestow upon you, Raphael J. Musto, the degree Doctor of Humane Letters, Honoris Causa, with all the rights and privileges appertaining thereto.