A renowned educator, scholar and jurist, you have dedicated much of your life in
distinguished service to advance the cause of civil rights in this country. A graduate of
Harvard College and the Yale Law School, you served as law clerk for Supreme Court
Justice Wiley Rutledge; worked as associate counsel for Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton
and Garrison, at the time the only interfaith, interracial Wall Street law firm; provided
counsel for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union; served as an attorney for the
United States Department of State and special assistant to Ambassador-at-large, Phillip
Jessup; at both Yale and the University of Pennsylvania you were appointed Professor
and Dean of their prestigious law schools; and now sit as Judge for the United States
District Court for the Eastern District of PA, appointed by President Carter in 1978.

A council member for the American Law Institute since 1978 and vice president of the
NAACP Legal Defense Fund for seven years, you have written scores of respected legal
articles and a two-volume history of the Constitution and the Supreme Court.

Having argued cases before the United States Supreme Court and authored or shared
authorship in numerous briefs for cases argued before the Supreme Court, you have had a
unique opportunity to contribute to the development and reform of the law in the United
States.

A recent Philadelphia Magazine cover story named you one of the 76 smartest
Philadelphians. A prominent litigator quoted in the article described you as, “The
sweetest, most scholarly and intellectual judge on the Pennsylvania bench—state, federal,
trial or appeal.”

Devoted husband to your lovely wife Katherine, this July you will celebrate 50 years of
marriage. Father of five daughters and grandfather of eight, you have lived your
extraordinary life always with a family-first philosophy.

In the last 50 years of our country’s history, few have been eyewitness to civil rights
reform with the same vantage point as yours. As a member of Thurgood Marshall’s inner
circle, you were an architect of the strategy and shared in writing the brief, for the
argument of Brown v. Board of Education before the United States Supreme Court in
1954. The case launched the modern civil rights movement and led to other court
decisions that struck down all forms of legalized racial discrimination. Your
commitment to civil rights and liberties took you again and again to the battlegrounds of
unrest in the 1960’s. You were there for the Birmingham Boycott in 1963 to help
mediate a settlement, and in Montgomery to intervene with the Justice Department on
behalf of the Freedom Riders.

Public service takes many shapes and forms in our country and occurs at every level of
our society, from grassroots activities to the senior levels of our national government.
Although the level and scope of activity may differ, what is common among those most
successful is that they place the interests of others ahead of their own. In this respect, you have been an exemplar. You have dedicated your life to improve the human condition and refute injustice. Your faith in the power of human beings to surmount prejudice and oppression and live by the rule of law has made you a champion of justice. As a jurist you have demonstrated compassion, a depth and breadth of scholarship, keen powers of analysis, a lofty moral tone, and integrity. You enjoy the highest esteem and respect of your judicial colleagues and of the legal profession. Your entire life you have recognized the promise of democracy and been an example of humanity to which all of us should be beckoned.

It is with distinct pleasure that I, by the authority vested in me by the Board of Trustees of Wilkes University and by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, confer upon you, Louis H. Pollak, the degree, Doctor of Laws, honoris causa, with all the rights and privileges thereto appertaining.