John Hope Franklin, you have sought through the writing of history to liberate our nation by enlightening us about our past. In your native Oklahoma as a youth in the 1920s you experienced a mob attacking your father's law office. You attended Fisk University during your undergraduate years, then went to Harvard University where you earned an M.A. and a Ph.D. in history. After your first decade of teaching history, you took time off at your own expense to write a comprehensive historical account of Negro men and women in American history. The result in 1947 was the book *From Slavery to Freedom*, which forty years later remains the most valued single volume on the Black experience in America. While teaching at Howard University in the early 1950s, you conducted historical seminars on reconstruction for the lawyers preparing the plaintiffs' case against segregated schools. The decision of the Supreme Court in Brown vs. the Topeka Board of Education in 1954, overturning the "Separate but Equal" doctrine which had made segregated schools legal, rested upon your historical scholarship.

Through your extraordinarily rich and active career, you have used the tool of historical research and writing to help us understand the central place in our national drama of the institution of slavery and the pivotal importance for the growth of personal and political freedom for all Americans of the ongoing struggle to secure the rights and opportunities for Black Americans. You have been educating students of history for half a century at institutions ranging from Fisk and St. Augustine College to Howard University, Brooklyn College; the University of Chicago, and Duke University. In addition, you have been a visiting professor at universities throughout America and the world. You have provided your students with the example and stimulus of your scholarly publications. Your most recent major work on *George Washington Williams*, a Pennsylvanian and the first Black historian to write a full-length history of Negro Americans in the nineteenth century, has been a four-decade labor of love and detective work. You traveled the world in search of evidence on this remarkable pioneer in the writing of Afro-American history, in many ways your predecessor.

For such respected accomplishments and because of your personal leadership qualities of diligence and integrity, you have been elected to the presidency of all three major national professional historical associations and of the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa. You have served on the boards of corporations and of major museums and libraries, as well as of such scholarly organizations as The Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences and The National Council on the Humanities. You continue to serve on the Board of your beloved alma mater, Fisk University, where you were chairman for seven years. You have helped strengthen America's relations with other nations in your service on the Presidential Advisory Board on Ambassadorial Appointments, the U. S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, and the United States Board of Foreign Scholars. You have been helped to achieve your many accomplishments by the love and support of your wife Aurelia and your son Whit. In addition, you have had a consuming passion for orchids. You have brought orchids from throughout the world to your own greenhouse in Durham and nurtured them with care. In this interest as in your scholarship, you have kept ever before you what is beautiful in nature and in human beings, even as you have dealt with much that is ugly. In that balance, you have helped us to see our history whole.

Wilkes College is proud to join the more than seventy colleges and universities that have granted you honorary degrees as recognition of your life and work in behalf of historical understanding and the expansion of human freedom.

By the power vested in me by the Board of Trustees and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I am proud to confer upon you, John Hope Franklin, the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters with all the rights and privileges appertaining thereto.