Wilkes University
Commencement, January 24, 1991
Citation for the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science

DR. FRANCIS J. MICHELINI

Dr. "Mike," you were seven years a teacher of biology, eight years the Dean of Academic Affairs, and five years the President at Wilkes College from 1955 to 1975. One of the best liked, friendliest figures in the College's history, you both inspired your students and helped attract and hire outstanding faculty members among whom at this date are many of the academic leaders of the University. You learned your academic administration at the hands of a master, Dr. Eugene Farley, and served him faithfully, complementing his qualities and being ever accessible to faculty and students. Wilkes College of the 1960s enjoyed a kind of golden age thanks in no small part to your leadership. You were chosen by the trustees to do the impossible, replace the Founding Father of Wilkes College as President in 1970. In this delicate and demanding role you systematically began the process of sharing responsibility and authority with the faculty, an absolute imperative if Wilkes College were to achieve academic maturity. In the midst of this controversial effort, the College and the Valley were devastated by Hurricane Agnes. With hard hat and motorboat, shovel and broom you led your colleagues to rebuild the College. As commanding general of Operation Snapback, you helped lead Wilkes to victory in one of the most striking comebacks from disaster of any college in American history. You mobilized the campus, the community and the country, from City Hall to the White House to draw together the necessary resources to rebuild Wilkes College. Throughout the transition from Dr. Farley's more than three decades of leadership to the shared governance of faculty and administration of your presidency and throughout the exhausting and occasionally exhilarating rebuilding after the flood, you were tough and tender, indefatigable and loving of this place. Your personal sacrifices helped Wilkes to emerge triumphant.

When you left our valley, you took up the challenges of guiding the interests of independent higher education in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as President of the Commission of Independent Colleges and Universities. Working with the presidents of these institutions, and with leaders of the other sectors of higher education in Pennsylvania, you have provided leadership for fifteen years to education in our Commonwealth. Others have recently celebrated this leadership upon your retirement from CICU and we join their chorus. But it remains to your Wilkes University to hail you for a job without parallel in the history of higher education. You led students, staff, faculty, trustees, and community to help Wilkes College rise from the mud stronger and more confident to face its promising future.

By the power vested in me by the Board of Trustees and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I confer upon you, Francis J. Michelini, the degree Doctor of Science Honoris Causa with all the rights and privileges appertaining thereto.