John J. Pomerantz, you are a model of successful leadership, both in the fashion industry and in our broader society where you have demonstrated a high degree of creative philanthropy. You represent an increasingly rare phenomenon, a son who has taken over his father's business and moved it to new heights of national and international success. Your father, Fred P. Pomerantz, brought Leslie Fay from the garment district in New York to the Wyoming Valley in 1946, thereby creating desperately needed jobs for an area facing chronic recession. Happy with the strong work ethic and loyalty of the Valley's work force, you as Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer, have recently expanded the manufacturing, distribution, administrative and finance facilities of Leslie Fay in the Greater Wilkes-Barre area. With more than 2,000 local employees out of 5,000 worldwide, you have kept faith with the workers who helped make Leslie Fay a world leader of moderate-priced women's apparel. While your company grew with the rapid expansion of retail outlets in the 1980s, you anticipated the slowdown of the 1990s and the resulting alteration of consumer spending habits by a restructuring of your organization and a sharpening of your strategic plans guided by the ambitious goal to be the best apparel maker in America, creating apparel with value for every woman in the country at an affordable price no matter what her pocketbook or her physical size.

In this restructuring and refocusing of Leslie Fay, you have been the most people-oriented individual in the entire organization. While others ask how each change will affect cost, you ask how it will affect people. Your father, a sometimes stern taskmaster, came to recognize the great value to the company of your people-centered approach, seeing that you more than he had the genius to lead Leslie Fay. In a similar way, you have recognized the world, not just the nation, as your theater of operations. As a result, you have kept Leslie Fay competitive internationally and growing, while expanding jobs here at home. There is much for other American companies to learn from you and from Leslie Fay.

Again following your father's example, you have been a leading philanthropist, investing your time and resources to strengthen your own fashion industry, improve educational institutions, to support the arts, and to promote public awareness of the AIDS crisis early on when few public or corporate leaders dared raise their voices. You have inspired others to invest as you have in research to discover a cure for this dread disease. A graduate of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, you chair its Undergraduate Board. You are Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Fashion Institute of Technology, which in 1988 bestowed upon you its "One Man Makes a Difference" award. You are a member of the Board of Directors of the American Committee of the Shenkar College of Textile Technology and Fashion in Israel. You are a member of the Board of Overseers of the Albert Einstein Medical School, which conferred its Humanitarian Award upon you in 1984. Yeshiva University recognized your many contributions when conferring an honorary degree upon you as Wilkes University does today. Music and the fine arts in New York City have been the particular beneficiaries of your generous support.

Father of three daughters, Andrea, Susie and Marnie, you have shown your commitment to young people by investing your time, talents and resources not only in girls but also in the boys of New York as Chair of the Greater New York Council of the Boy Scouts of America. The international officers of B’nai B’rith gave you their "Champion of Youth Award." You and your devoted wife Laura, corporate Vice President of The Leslie Fay Companies, Inc., are the very model of a modern enlightened partnership in marriage and business.

In recognition of your exemplary leadership, and by virtue of the power vested in me by the Wilkes University Board of Trustees and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I confer upon you, John J. Pomerantz, the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, Honoris Causa, with all the rights and privileges appertaining thereto.