Dick Hyman, master and virtuoso pianist, organist, composer, conductor and arranger, you have preserved and presented in concerts and recordings unforgettable the legacy of America's greatest songwriters, jazz performers and especially pianists. You have become the historian of jazz piano, instructing your audiences on the evolution of this quintessential American art form and performing in their authentic styles the arrangements and renditions of such early greats as Scott Joplin, Jelly Roll Morton, James P. Johnson, Fats Waller and their successors, Duke Ellington, Art Tatum, Bud Powell and many more. Native of New York, graduate of Columbia College in 1948, you began performing in Harlem that same year. You soon were heard regularly on radio and began a career in studio performance that has few peers. Your mediums of expression include not only radio and television, but film and recordings on vinyl, tape and compact disc. You have played on thousands of recordings and are credited with more than 100 albums under your own name. In the best spirit of jazz you excel as both soloist and sideman and you have maintained the prominence of many seniors of jazz by performing with them regularly. Your two-week Jazz Festival in July at the 92nd Street Y has become one of America's premier jazz events.

On seven occasions you have participated in the "Jazz at Wilkes Program" which our good friend, Andrew Sordoni, has organized and supported. In commenting on the integrity and masterful quality of your lecture and performances, Andrew observes that Dick Hyman "is so good and knows so much of the subject that he could fool us virtually all of the time, but the forces within him that make him so good preclude him from ever doing it". Our students and the community have benefited from your expertise and virtuosity as teacher and example as you presented your musical colleagues Ruby Braff; Urbie Green, Michael Moore and Joe Wilder along with the showcase for your compositions and arrangements: The Perfect Jazz Quintet. Further, you have supported and accompanied programs at Wilkes and in our region with Milt Hinton and Flip Phillips, for the benefit of Temple Hesed in Scranton with Dick Wellstood and for the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic with Bob Wilber, the first Director of Jazz Studies at Wilkes.

Wilkes University was proud to be featured in the recent Atlantic Monthly article on your achievements entitled, "Doin' the Chameleon," which refers both to your dazzling imitation of dozens of jazz greats and to your score of the song of the same name in Woody Allen's film, Zelig. To observe your performing talents and role as historian on location, the article's author came to Wilkes to attend your lecture-recital: "The History of Jazz Piano from Ragtime to the Avant-garde" which you have presented here twice and which we trust you will present again and again.

Your friends and admirers rejoice in the increasing recognition of your unique career, including your induction this past year into the Jazz Hall of Fame at Rutgers Institute of Jazz Studies, your seven Most Valuable Player Awards from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, and your frequent appearances on PBS and NPR as lecturer, performer, composer, arranger and director. Whether in the White House, at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall in Florida, at concerts and festivals all over the world, or in the recording studio with your interpretation of Thelonius Monk or one of your own compositions, or accompanying your daughter on violin, you have dedicated your talent and hard work to the enrichment of a worldwide audience of music lovers.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I, by the power vested in me by the Board of Trustees of Wilkes University and by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby confer upon you, Richard R. Hyman, the Doctorate of Humane Letters, Honoris Causa, with all the rights and privileges appertaining thereto.