Citation for the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Humane Letters

LORRAINE E. HALE

Lorraine E. Hale, a Philadelphian by birth, you absorbed many lessons growing up in your home in Harlem, New York, where your mother, Clara, who the world would come to know as Mother Hale, took in foster children. From this constantly expanding family you and your brother were given the chance to discover the potential in each individual if given a supportive environment, good nutrition and love. It was natural for you from such an environment to go into teaching after earning your baccalaureate degree from Long Island University. Your experience with children ultimately led you to earn two Masters degrees in Special Education and Psychology from City College and Fordham University and a Ph.D in Child Development and Development Psychology from New York University. But your experience as a first grade teacher, then a guidance counselor, and finally a school psychologist in the New York Public Schools left you frustrated because you were not having the impact on young lives that you had envisioned. Your Road to Damascus experience occurred while driving one April day in 1969 when you noticed a young, drug-addicted mother, holding a tiny infant, sitting on a wooden crate on a Harlem street corner. After approaching her, you urged her to go to your mother for help. You forgot to alert your mother to this generous act, and thus confronted her with a junkie and child. Within weeks you and Mother Hale had twenty-two such children, all that Hale House could accommodate. You had begun the first facility in America for alcohol and drug-addicted infants. From this spontaneous act of kindness, you began learning how to help the young mothers pull their lives together as well as how to wean the youngsters from the traumatic pain of their addiction, whether to alcohol, heroine or cocaine. With financial support, first from the Office of Economic Opportunity and then from private sources, Hale House in time would perfect such programs of assistance as Homeward Bound, Hale Haven, Time out for Moms, Children Helping Children, Hale House Respite, and Hale House Dormitory (an opportunity for college students to become involved with your work). In time you also confronted the HIV/AIDS epidemic among your tiny charges. After the initial reluctance of your staff to endanger themselves by treating these little victims of their parents' transgressions, you committed Hale House to the same nurturing and love of such children as you had shown to those who were born with a drug or alcohol addiction. To a nation that is in the process of rediscovering what you have long preached, that all of our children, regardless of color, physical or mental attributes, parentage, or where they live, "are our business," you have been a beacon of hope and insight. Your example is one for our graduates to consider as they open themselves to their Road to Damascus experiences. Let them hear your advice: "Once you have the dream, you're always on the way. That's my theory. A goal is just a dream with a deadline."

By the power vested in me by the Trustees of Wilkes University and by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hereby confer upon you, Lorraine E. Hale, the degree Doctor of Humane Letters, Honoris Causa, with all the rights and privileges appertaining thereto.