

Honorary Degree

DOCTOR OF HUMANE LETTERS.....Marlee Matlin

Born and raised in Morton Grove, Illinois, it was clear from an early age that you are a special person, with special gifts, who would lead an extraordinary life. The decisions your parents made for you early in your childhood set the stage for your success as an actress, a role model and advocate, and your most cherished role- that of mom to Sarah, Brandon, Tyler and Isabele . You encourage us to count our blessings, to celebrate what makes each of us unique and to see possibility in the most difficult of circumstances. In the midst of the most challenging situations, you have learned to find the serendipitous.

Your professional career is already one of merit and distinction. At age 21, you became the youngest recipient of the Best Actress Oscar for your role in “Children of a Lesser God.” As one of only four actresses to receive that honor for a film debut, you were also awarded a Golden Globe by the Hollywood Foreign Press for Best Actress in a Drama. With four Emmy Award Nominations for your work on *Seinfeld*, *Picket Fences*, *The Practice* and *Law and Order: SVU*, you have been honored with two other Golden Globe nominations, a nomination for a CableACE Award, and a nomination for a People’s Choice Award.

Known for your devotion of time and energy to numerous organizations, your influence and contributions extend well beyond your artistic accomplishments. In 1994, President Clinton appointed you to the Board of Directors for the Corporation for National Service, and in 1995 you were honored in a White House Rose Garden ceremony for your work as Chairperson for National Volunteer Week. As a national celebrity spokesperson for the American Red Cross, you also serve on the national boards for Easter Seals and the Children Affected by Aids Foundation. Your considerable talents, first-hand experiences and unwavering commitment to bettering the quality of life have made you not only a champion for the hearing-impaired community but also a model world citizen for us all. Your testimony before Congress was instrumental in getting federal legislation passed requiring all televisions manufactured in the United States be equipped with close-captioning technology.

While your artistic endeavors alone might be reason enough for the recognition we bestow today, we take this special opportunity to salute your eloquent advocacy that creates genuine opportunities for those who are differently-abled. You provide inspiration and hope so that they are able to live their lives with dignity, optimism and the promise that they might achieve their fullest potential. By the power vested in me by the Board of Trustees of Wilkes University, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hereby confer upon you, **Marlee Matlin**, the doctorate of humane letters, Honoris Causa, with all the rights and privileges appertaining thereto.