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Joseph Papp

Mr. President, I have the honor to present as a candidate for an honorary degree JOSEPH PAPP. A graduate of the Actors Laboratory, Mr. Papp began his theatrical career as an actor before turning to directing and producing. In 1953, he founded as producer-director the New York Shakespeare Festival. Under his guidance, this company has grown from a free workshop in a church basement to a multi-faceted, tax-exempt corporation which includes the Delacorte Theatre in Central Park, the Mobile Theatre, the New York Public Theatre with its multiple stage spaces, and the Vivian Beaumont and Mitzi Newhouse Theatres at Lincoln Center. Its work dominates not only the professional theatre of New York, but of all America.

The recipient of all major awards in the professional theatre, Mr. Papp has been recognized for his humanitarian concerns by such diverse groups as the American Jewish Congress, the Teachers Union, and the New School for Social Research. He has also been recognized by the educational theatre with a multitude of awards and adjunct professorships at such institutions as Yale University, Columbia University, and the University of Colorado.

Mr. Papp's commitment to theatre as a social force, not just as entertainment, has led to new plays, new audiences, and a new vitality in the American theatre. He has nurtured the new playwrights and has fostered a number of the most controversial, stimulating, and important of the modern dramas. A champion of the disenfranchised, he has opened the theatre to an audience for whom it had no voice.

It is appropriate that as we celebrate the first season of The Playhouse and our continuing commitment to the theatre and its audience, we honor a man who has the imagination and courage to provide creative leadership for the American theatre.

Therefore, on behalf of the Faculty of Kalamazoo College, I recommend that upon JOSEPH PAPP be conferred the honorary degree, Doctor of Fine Arts.