

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST TO AWARD AN HONORARY DOCTOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**

**Action Requested:** Consider approval of the request by the University of Iowa to award an honorary Doctor of Science degree to Manuel Villafana at Spring 2014 Commencement.

**Executive Summary:** The University of Iowa wishes to recognize Mr. Villafana for his extraordinary achievements in the area of biomedical device development, his civic leadership, and his commitment to supporting the success of University of Iowa students.

**Details on Mr. Villafana's Accomplishments:**

- ◇ Mr. Villafana was born in 1940 in New York City to Puerto Rican immigrant parents and grew up in one of the poorest neighborhoods of the Bronx where he attended Cardinal Hayes High School.
- ◇ Although he never attended college, he is widely recognized as one of the world's preeminent innovators in the area of medical devices. His work has touched countless lives.
- ◇ He began his career in 1964 at medical-device exporter Picker International where he worked for three years. In 1967, he was hired by Medtronic to become their first international sales administrator. He worked at Medtronic as a cardiac valve and pacemaker salesman for five years; during that time, he began his evolution as an entrepreneur.
- ◇ In 1971, he launched Cardiac Pacemakers, Inc. (CPI), a company that revolutionized the pacemaker industry by introducing a long life lithium iodine pacemaker, a technology still used by a majority of the market. CPI was ultimately acquired by Eli Lilly & Company, which spun it out as Guidant which designed and manufactured cardiovascular health care products.
- ◇ In 1976, he founded St. Jude Medical where he and his team engineered the first bi-leaflet mechanical heart valve, which reduced the frequency of blood clots in patients. In 1982, he founded GV Medical, which developed a device to open blood vessels. In 1987, he founded Helix BioCore (later ATS Medical) which developed a bi-leaflet valve that reduces clots and improves blood flow. In 2000, he launched CABG Medical (which closed in 2006) which developed an artificial graft for coronary bypass surgery. In 2007, he launched Kips Bay Medical, a medical device company that focuses on developing, manufacturing, and commercializing its proprietary external saphenous vein support technology for use in coronary artery bypass grafting surgery. Today, Mr. Villafana is the Founder, Chairman, and Chief Executive Officer of Kips Bay Medical.
- ◇ Mr. Villafana and his wife, Tippie College of Business alumna Elizabeth Elder Villafana, are committed to enhancing the impact of the University of Iowa College of Engineering and to supporting the success of its students. His work with faculty in the Biomedical Engineering Program, which was implemented in 1974 when few other such programs existed, helped propel it toward its present prestigious, national recognition.

- ◇ Mr. Villafana is also dedicated to helping young people realize their potential and become leaders. He is a generous supporter of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, especially the Kips Bay Boys and Girls Club in New York, where he spent a great deal of his childhood.
- ◇ Mr. Villafana has received numerous awards and honors, including induction into the Minnesota Science and Technology Hall of Fame in 2010; the Ellis Island Medal of Honor in 2006; the Living Legend in Medicine Award from the World Society of Cardiothoracic Surgeons in 2006; induction into the Minnesota Business Hall of Fame in 2003; the Grand Prize Recipient – Mediterranean Institute of Cardiology in 1998; induction into the Boys and Girls Club of America Hall of Fame in 1993; and the National Entrepreneur of the Year Award in the Master Category in 1990.
- ◇ The University of Iowa wishes to recognize Mr. Villafana's extraordinary accomplishments with an honorary degree.