

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST TO AWARD AN HONORARY DOCTOR OF HUMANE LETTERS DEGREE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA**

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by the University of Northern Iowa to award an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree to Robert James Waller at Fall 2016 or Spring 2017 Commencement.

Executive Summary: The University of Northern Iowa wishes to recognize Dr. Waller for his distinguished career in higher education, literature, and the arts.

Details on Dr. Waller's Accomplishments:

- ◇ Dr. Waller grew up in Rockford, Iowa, and attended the University of Northern Iowa where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Education in 1962 and a Master of Arts in Education in Business Education in 1964. Dr. Waller received his Ph.D. in 1968 from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University.
- ◇ He began his career in higher education in 1968, teaching management, economics and decision theory at the University of Northern Iowa, where he continued to teach until 1989. He was the inaugural dean of UNI's School of Business, serving in this position for six years from 1980-1986.
- ◇ Dr. Waller has lectured and published in the fields of problem solving and decision making. He has consulted for U.S.-based and global corporations, in addition to government institutions.
- ◇ Dr. Waller's extraordinary teaching touched the lives of thousands of undergraduate students. He built his compelling classroom lessons using his own path-breaking managerial decision making research. Joe Dunsmore, CEO of Digi International, learned the value of the small increment from Dr. Waller: "This powerful concept became a foundational principle for me."
- ◇ Dr. Waller was not only a professor in management, but also a professor in life according to his former students. Troy Henkle, a communication technician and expedition leader, wrote: "Through Dr. Waller's class, I learned how to actually take business concepts and apply them to the real world. Until then, I had only learned how to take business concepts and apply them to the business world." Dr. Waller wrote of his support for his students: "In truth, I find myself cheering the accomplishments of my former students with far more enthusiasm than I do my own."
- ◇ His novel, *The Bridges of Madison County*, with over 50 million copies sold, has been translated into more than 40 languages and became both a major motion picture and a Tony-nominated Broadway musical.
- ◇ Dr. Waller has written seven additional novels, five non-fiction books and a collection of essays including an account of natural beauty and environmental challenges closely observed during his solitary canoe trips down Iowa's Shell Rock River.

- ◇ In addition to being active in research, teaching and writing throughout a long career, and being a member of UNI's basketball team during his undergraduate years, Dr. Waller has been involved with music throughout his life, learning to play multiple instruments; he even composed songs for the album *The Ballads of Madison County*. Waller is also a well-known photographer and has published *Images*, a collection of 28 photographs of Iowa.
- ◇ His financial contributions to the University of Northern Iowa have established the Robert James Waller Scholarship in Economics, the Charles T. Leavitt Scholarship in Economics, the Robert James Waller Professorship in Economics, the Robert James Waller College of Business Faculty Enrichment fund, support for jazz scholarships, and the Honors Program. In addition, UNI's Rod Library received royalties from his books.
- ◇ The University of Northern Iowa wishes to recognize Dr. Waller for his extraordinary accomplishments with an honorary degree.