

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

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

**Action Requested:** Consider approval of the request by the University of Iowa to award an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree to Ted Waitt at Spring 2017 Commencement.

**Executive Summary:** The University of Iowa wishes to recognize Mr. Waitt for his outstanding contributions as an entrepreneur and for his visionary philanthropy.

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

- ◇ Born in Sioux City, Iowa, Mr. Waitt is the son of a fourth generation cattleman. He attended the Universities of Colorado and Iowa.
- ◇ Ted Waitt is the founder and chairman of the Waitt Foundation. At 22, he co-founded Gateway 2000, Inc., where he helped pioneer the direct marketing of personal computers. Labeled a maverick by national business publications, he became a Fortune 500 CEO and member of the Forbes 400 by the time he was barely 30. Since his retirement from Gateway in 2004, he has gone on to form multiple enterprises: Avalon Capital Group, Inc., The Waitt Foundation, The Waitt Institute for Violence Prevention, and The Waitt Institute.
- ◇ For more than a decade, Mr. Waitt has served as a Trustee of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in various capacities. Previously, he served as a Vice Chair of the Board as well as Chair of the Governance Committee. He currently sits on the Executive Committee. In 2007, he established the Waitt Advanced Biophotonics Center with a \$20 million dollar grant. Since inception, the Biophotonics Center has gained numerous awards and accolades and remains a model interdisciplinary and collaborative core facility at the cutting edge of imaging technology. Mr. Waitt is highly passionate in the areas of human health, aging, and nutrition, and believes the next decade will be a great age of discovery in biomedical research.
- ◇ Mr. Waitt currently serves on the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of the National Geographic Society (NGS). As NGS's largest living donor, he has worked on many issues; among them the NGS/Waitt Grants Program, and the GENOGRAPHIC PROJECT which created the largest dataset in history focused on our shared human ancestry from an anthropological perspective. Mr. Waitt has travelled to more than 100 countries in a never ending search to understand more about our planet, its people, and history. He also serves on the Board of Advisors for the NGS Pristine Seas Initiative, and has sponsored dozens of marine science expeditions, across all 5 oceans and 7 continents.
- ◇ His commitment to the NGS has also led to innovations in research and social justice. His support enabled the translation - in just five years - of the *Codex Tchacos*, an ancient book containing the *Gospel of Judas*, the most significant discovery of ancient, non-biblical Christian or Jewish texts in the last 70 years.

- ◇ Mr. Waitt believes that the depletion of ocean resources is one of the biggest challenges of our generation. Over the past eight years, he has dedicated his time and resources to the cause of ocean conservation. The Waitt Foundation has invested over \$60 million in various ocean conservation initiatives. Primarily focused on the creation of the national parks of the sea, WF is currently engaged in projects to create over 15 million square kilometers of marine protected areas around the world. Mr. Waitt is a founding member of Oceans 5, a highly successful collaboration of ocean funders working together to protect the oceans.
- ◇ Over the years, Mr. Waitt has earned a number of honors, among them: the Young Entrepreneur of the Year award from the U.S. Small Business Association; two Ernst and Young Entrepreneur of the Year awards; Marketing Computers Marketer of the Year; and he was named one of the Ten Outstanding Young Americans (TOYA) by the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce. He was appointed by Congress to serve on the Advisory Commission on Electronic Commerce, and has been named one of the top 50 philanthropists by Business Week magazine.
- ◇ The University of Iowa wishes to recognize Mr. Waitt's extraordinary achievements. He has made the world a healthier and more just place by enabling some of the most innovative scientific, research, and conservation programs in the world.