

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

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

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by the University of Iowa to award an honorary Doctor of Law degree to Robert D. Ray at Spring 2012 Commencement.

Executive Summary: The University of Iowa wishes to recognize Governor Ray for his exceptional leadership as governor of the state of Iowa, his visionary and dedicated service to the people of the state and nation before and since his governorship, and his exemplary role as a model "citizen lawyer."

Details on Governor Ray's Accomplishments:

- ◇ Governor Ray earned his B.A. (1952) and J.D. (1954) from Drake University. He practiced law in Des Moines for 14 years before embarking on his political career.
- ◇ First elected at age 40, Mr. Ray served as governor of Iowa from 1969 to 1983. As governor, he advanced human rights in Iowa. In 1973, he convened the first Iowa Conference on the Status of Women; this led to legislation creating the Commission on the Status of Women which he signed into law. By Executive Order, he declared that Iowa's state government should be open to people for employment and appointment to public positions regardless of their race, color, or creed.
- ◇ Governor Ray encouraged and actively assisted in the resettlement in Iowa of 10,000 refugees from Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand shortly after the withdrawal from Vietnam by the United States. His advocacy for refugees continued after his governorship – he served as a delegate to the United Nations Conference on Refugees in Geneva in 1979 and later as special assistant to the U.S. chief United Nations delegate.
- ◇ Governor Ray was an early advocate of recycling and issued executive orders for energy conservation and paperwork reduction. He established a Task Force on Government Ethics, Science Advisory Committee, and Iowa High Technology Commission.
- ◇ One of Governor Ray's first challenges was the public outcry about student demonstrations on Iowa campuses, particularly at the University of Iowa. As a new governor, he met with newly appointed University of Iowa President Willard Boyd and Board of Regents President Stanley Redeker to agree on prompt and open communication, which proved very effective. Despite public pressure, Governor Ray never intervened during campus demonstrations, which differed from governors in other states. Governor Ray respected the integrity of the university during those difficult times.
- ◇ Governor Ray served as chair of the National Governors Association, chair of the Education Commission of the States, and president of the Council of State Governments. Following his time as governor, he served as interim president of Drake University and interim mayor of Des Moines, where he initiated a city beautification program.

- ◇ He was chair of the Iowa Sesquicentennial Commission and helped establish the Institute for Character Development at Drake University, which is best known for its “Character Counts” programs in Iowa schools.
- ◇ In 2010, he served as spokesperson for “Fair Courts for Us,” a group that sought to educate the public about the importance of a nonpolitical, fair, and impartial court system, in the wake of the contentious Iowa Supreme Court retention elections that followed the Varnum v. Brien gay marriage decision.
- ◇ Governor Ray has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including the Christine Wilson Medal for Equality and Justice, which is given to individuals whose lives and work have illustrated outstanding dedication and service to those values. He was the first recipient of the medal in 1982.
- ◇ The University of Iowa College of Law activity promotes its Citizen Lawyer Program, which encourages law students to use their education and their legal training in the service of others. The embodiment of the Citizen Lawyer concept, Governor Ray is an exceptional role model for university students.