

Agendum
Oakland University
Board of Trustees Formal Session
February 24, 2014

APPROVAL OF HONORARY DEGREE FOR DR. TERRY BLACKHAWK
A Recommendation

1. **Division and Department:** Academic Affairs, Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.
2. **Introduction:** In accordance with Article IX of the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees, honorary degrees may be awarded by the Board of Trustees in recognition of distinguished accomplishment and service within the scope of the arts and letters, sciences, professions, and public service as recognized and supported by the University. The awarding of honorary degrees reaffirms Oakland University's scholarly, creative, and humanitarian values and ties the University to the community at large.

Dr. Terry Blackhawk is a highly regarded and award winning poet with six books of poetry and numerous individual poems published in distinguished journals and forums to her credit. Her second book of poetry, *Escape Artist* won the John Ciardi Poetry Prize in 2003. She received the Pablo Neruda Poetry Prize in 2010. In 1990 she received the Foley Poetry Award. Her most recent book of poems, *The Light Between*, was a top ten poetry best seller within a month of its publication. Donna Seaman wrote in *Booklist* "Language itself is alive to Blackhawk as a field of high grass in the wind, and, reverent and playful, she writes appreciatively and knowledgeable not only of nature but also of art..."

She is a frequent lecturer at conferences and was an adjunct professor at Oakland University. Dr. Blackhawk taught English, speech, reading and creative writing in the Detroit Public Schools for nearly 30 years. Her nominators state: "In this role, she carried out the many tasks that English teachers are typically assigned or assume: teaching writing and reading to talented and struggling children; teaching speech and public speaking to reluctant and inspired children; counselor and inspirer of children who came to her classes with many hopes and needs. Under her leadership, students won many local, state and national writing awards, and their literary magazines were consistently ranked among the best in the country...her children were well served by her dedication to their interests."

The InsideOut Literary Arts project was founded as a 501c3 in 1995 by Dr. Blackhawk with a mission of serving children enrolled in Detroit Public Schools.

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She remains the executive director of this organization that recruits poets and writers to work with school children throughout Detroit. The best poems and writings and artistic works are published and widely distributed. Over 350 of these books have been published over the years with 28 published in 2012 alone. InsideOut also seeks to strengthen students “personally, socially, and academically” in addition to improving writing skills. InsideOut is one of the leading youth arts organizations in Detroit.

Terry Blackhawk is an accomplished poet with rich and deep connections to the Detroit Metro region. She has enriched the community she lives in by giving back in such a meaningful way. She has taken her formidable skills into difficult areas to make a positive change.

3. **Previous Board Action:** The Board of Trustees periodically awards honorary degrees at its Formal Sessions.

4. **Budget Implications:** None.

5. **Educational Implications:** The awarding of honorary degrees is an established tradition in academe, by which the University reaffirms its scholarly, creative, and humanitarian values and its ties to the wider community.

6. **Personnel Implications:** None.

7. **University Reviews/Approvals:** The Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost has recommended approval of the recipient to receive an Honorary Degree.

8. **Recommendation:**

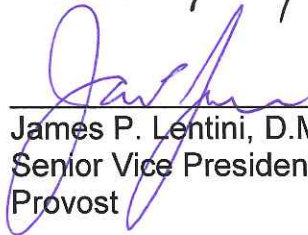
RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees awards the honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities *Honoris Causa*, to Dr. Terry Blackhawk.

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9. Attachments: None.

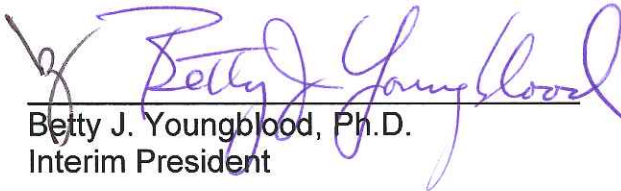
Submitted to the President

on 2/21/, 2014 by



James P. Lentini, D.M.A.
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and
Provost

Recommendation on Feb. 21, 2014
to the Board for Approval by



Betty J. Youngblood, Ph.D.
Interim President