

## AWARD HONORARY DEGREES, CHICAGO

**Action:** Award Honorary Degrees

**Funding:** No New Funding Required

The University of Illinois at Chicago Senate has nominated the following persons for conferral of honorary degrees at the Commencement exercises in May 2020.

The Chancellor, University of Illinois at Chicago, and Vice President, University of Illinois recommends approval of these nominations.

### **Deb Hamilton, Activist** -- the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters

Deb Hamilton is a volunteer activist determined to improve public policy for people with disabilities, with an emphasis on inclusive living and humane employment practices. She works to build awareness of working adults with disabilities throughout the nation who are legally earning as little as 2¢ an hour for their labor and that Illinois institutionalizes more people with developmental disabilities than any other state, with the exception of one. Deb's end goal is to eliminate all types of segregation for people with disabilities.

After earning a B.A. and M.A. from Bradley University, Deb completed Ph.D. coursework in Disability Studies at UIC, under the advisement of Dr. Carol J. Gill. Stopping just short of writing her dissertation and earning a doctorate, she quit school in order to turn her attention to the needs of her family. Prior to any of this formal schooling, Deb completed an intensive yearlong course in disability policy from the Illinois chapter of Partners in Policymaking, which provided the background she needed to lobby more effectively.

Deb is the Co-Founder and Treasurer of Inclusion PAC, a nonpartisan issues-based political action committee registered with the Illinois Board of Elections. She started the Illinois Waits microsite, which documents that more than 19,000 people with developmental disabilities are waiting to receive home and community-based services in Illinois. She also serves on the public policy committee for The Arc of Illinois and the data-working group for the Going Home Coalition.

Volunteering as the Legislative Affairs Director for Illinois Parents of Adults with Developmental Disabilities (IPADD), Deb writes a yearly legislative scorecard called the Illinois Community Living Report (ICLR), tracking ten bills every year and publishing scores for each member of the Illinois General Assembly and for every sitting governor, which is the first scorecard of its kind in the nation.

She does all this with the support of her husband and three adult children, but especially with the backing of her daughter, Sarah, who proudly identifies as a person with a disability. Deb and Sarah operate as an advocacy team, seamlessly complementing each other's efforts while meeting with legislators, attending public hearings, and tracking bills in the Illinois General Assembly. Sarah's older brother, Marcus, lends technical support to round out their efforts. It is truly a family affair.

Deb and her family serve as living proof that it is still possible and desirable for ordinary citizens to influence the political process.

**William David Unger, Venture Capitalist and Philanthropist** -- the honorary degree of Doctor of Engineering

Mr. William Unger's contributions to the development of the U.S. high tech sector, his service to society through nonprofit organizations, and his unwavering commitment to future engineers are extraordinary.

Mr. Unger is a graduate of Chicago's Lane Technical High School and received a Bachelor of Arts in Special Education from UIC in 1971. He taught for one year before deciding to earn a certificate in mental health care, and moved to California. When funding cutbacks to community mental health left him out of work, he started working as a management recruiter for technology firms. This was the beginning of a long and productive relationship with U.S. technology firms in the early days of Silicon Valley. Mr. Unger joined the prestigious venture capital firm Mayfield Fund located in Menlo Park, California, in 1983, rising to general partner in 1987 and as Partner Emeritus since 2001.

During his tenure at Mayfield, he helped launch: SanDisk (acquired by Western Digital for \$19 billion in 2016), Silicon Architects (now Synopsys Inc.), Calico Commerce (acquired by Oracle), Newport Communications (acquired by Broadcom), Simplex Solutions (acquired by Cadence), Verplex Design Systems (acquired by Cadence), Stream Machine (acquired by Cirrus Logic), and Excess Bandwidth Corp. (acquired by Virata) among others. He was sought after as an expert in recruiting talent to build effective teams to successfully develop, market, and scale entrepreneurs' tech ideas.

While the success of these technological companies is impressive, Mr. Unger's accomplishments after leaving the world of venture capital are particularly noteworthy. Three nonprofits that have benefited enormously from his financial generosity, vision, and leadership are CARE USA, D-Rev, and the Anita Borg Institute. Mr. Unger has made many more meaningful contributions to our society including: samasource.org (which provides meaningful employment to women and youth around the world to create AI datasets); the Wildlife Conservation Network (which supports entrepreneurial conservationists to protect endangered species); and Adventure Scientists (which organizes volunteer scientists and adventurers to collect research data to assist in ecological research).

Mr. Unger's relationship with the UIC College of Engineering began 13 years ago when he joined the UIC Engineering Advisory Board in 2005. Since 2008, he has funded the Unger Scholars Program, which provides scholarships to entering UIC College of Engineering female students. The program aims to encourage young women to pursue an engineering education and to create a network of talented women students and alumnae who support each other's academic and professional development. To date, the program has awarded 100 scholarships to 103 UIC Engineering first-year students. Since 2008, 37 Unger Scholars have graduated and 43 Unger Scholars are currently enrolled in the College of Engineering. A handful of Unger Scholars have transferred to other UIC colleges and majors.

The Board action recommended in this item complies in all material respects with applicable State and federal laws, University of Illinois *Statutes*, *The General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*, and Board of Trustees policies and directives.

The Executive Vice President and Vice President for Academic Affairs concurs with this recommendation.

The President of the University recommends approval.