

Board Meeting
January 18, 2018

AWARD HONORARY DEGREES, URBANA

Action: Award Honorary Doctorate Degrees

Funding: No New Funding Required

The Senate of the Urbana-Champaign campus has recommended that honorary degrees be conferred on the following people at Commencement Exercises on May 12, 2018:

Robert S. Langer, the David H. Koch Institute Professor, Massachusetts Institute of Technology -- the honorary degree of Doctor of Engineering

Robert S. Langer received his B.S. in chemical engineering from Cornell University in 1970 and his Sc.D. in chemical engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1974. His nominators say he is “arguably the most important and recognized engineer alive.” He is considered a pioneer of many new technologies, including controlled release systems and transdermal delivery systems, which allow the administration of drugs or extraction of analytes from the body through the skin without needles or other invasive methods. Langer is also regarded as the founder of tissue engineering in regenerative medicine. He and the researchers in his laboratory have made advances in tissue engineering, such as the creation of engineered blood vessels and vascularized engineered muscle tissue. Bioengineered synthetic polymers provide a scaffolding on which new skin, muscle, bone, and entire organs can be grown. Dr. Langer has received over 220 major awards. He is one of only four living individuals to have received both the United States National Medal of Science (2006) and the United States National Medal of Technology and Innovation (2011). He also received the 2002 Charles Stark Draper Prize, considered the equivalent of the Nobel Prize for engineers, the 2008 Millennium Prize, the world largest technology prize, the 2012 Priestley Medal, the highest award of the American Chemical Society, the 2013 Wolf Prize in Chemistry, the 2014 Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences, and the 2014 Kyoto Prize. In 2015, Langer was awarded the Queen Elizabeth Prize for Engineering, arguably the most influential prize in the world for engineering.

Sheila Crump Johnson, CEO, Salamander Hotels and Resorts and Vice Chair, Monumental Sports & Entertainment -- the honorary degree of Doctor of Fine Arts

Sheila Crump Johnson received her B.S. in Music Education from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her nominator says she “stands among the most successful and accomplished UI alumni to have graduated in the past fifty years.” An accomplished violinist, she taught music at Sidwell Friends School and developed a robust private studio of violin students. In 1975, she founded Young Strings in Action, a group of aspiring musicians whom she took on an international tour. In 1979, Johnson co-founded Black Entertainment Television, the first network to focus on the needs, interests and culture of African Americans when it first aired in January 1980. In addition to initiating successful programming for adult audiences, Johnson created “Teen Summit,” a weekly program that allowed teenagers to speak candidly about critical issues in their lives. In 2005, as founder and CEO she launched Salamander Hotels and Resorts, now with three locations in Middleburg, VA; Destin, FL; and New Orleans, LA. That same year, she became President and Managing Partner of the Washington Mystics of the Women’s National Basketball Association. She has expanded her leadership role in athletics to become Vice Chair of Monumental Sports & Entertainment with ownership in three professional sports franchises: Washington Capitals (NHL), Washington Wizards (NBA), as well as the Mystics (WNBA). In 2006, she was appointed the Global Ambassador for CARE, a humanitarian agency fighting global poverty, and raised \$8 million by the following year. In 2010, Barack Obama appointed her to the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities. In the fall of 2016, the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics honored her with an Achievement Award in recognition of her success and of her distinction for being the first African-American cheerleader in Illini history.

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 Chancellor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Vice President, University of Illinois concurs in the recommendation.

The Executive Vice President and Vice President for Academic Affairs recommends approval.

The President of the University concurs in the recommendation.