Approved by the Board of Trustees

November 14, 2024

**07**

Board Meeting

November 14, 2024

# AWARD HONORARY DEGREES, URBANA

**Action:** Award Honorary Degrees

**Funding:** No New Funding Required

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Senate has nominated Sabina Alkire and Larry W. Gies for conferral of honorary degree awards at the Commencement exercises in May 2025. The chancellor, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and vice president, University of Illinois System, recommends approval of these nominations.

## Sabina Alkire, Professor, Department of International Development and Director, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), Oxford University – the honorary degree award of Doctor of Science and Letters

Dr. Sabina Alkire, a University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign graduate and Rhodes Scholar, has had a successful academic career at Oxford University. She is professor of international development and founder and director of the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI). Her major contribution to the science of economics and to the alleviation of world poverty has been the development of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). With James E. Foster at George Washington University, she developed the Alkire-Foster method for measuring multidimensional poverty, a flexible technique that can incorporate different dimensions or aspects of poverty to create measures tailored to different contexts. With colleagues at OPHI, the MPI has been applied and implemented empirically to produce a tool which identifies who is poor by considering and measuring the range of deprivations they suffer, guiding policymakers to the best way to alleviate poverty in geographical areas in which poverty exists in their countries, targeting those factors that are most important.

This has led to the development of National MPIs, carried out by Alkire and OPHI, that are tailored to a country’s specific context and conceptions of poverty and policy priorities. In 2009, Mexico became the first country to launch a national MPI, followed by an additional 34 countries to date.

In 2010, Alkire and a post-doctoral student created the world standard Global MPI in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which is updated annually. The global multidimensional Poverty Index compares acute multidimensional poverty for 111 countries in developing regions. These countries are home to 6.1 billion people, three-quarters of the world’s population, and 1.2 billion (19.1 percent) are identified by the 2022 MPI as multidimensionally poor. As a result of this ground-breaking work, Alkire has been a speaker and panel member at United Nations sessions and conferences relating to global poverty.

In 2013, Alkire and two colleagues established the Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network (MPNN), a community of senior policymakers from governments engaged in reducing multidimensional poverty, which, to date, convenes 61 countries and 20 international agencies. The MPPN hosts annual meetings, side events at the United Nations General Assembly and Statistical Commission, and teleconferences for updates or briefings, all organized by OPHI.

It is rare that any individual’s work has such a profound impact on so great a number of individuals throughout the world.

## Larry W. Gies, Founder and CEO, Madison Industries – the honorary degree award of Doctor of Humane Letters

Larry W. Gies has dedicated his life and career to improving the lives of others through both his professional and philanthropic efforts. Mr. Gies is CEO and founder of Madison Industries, which he has built into one of the largest and most successful privately held companies in the world. Madison Industries builds entrepreneurially driven, market-leading companies that make the world safer, healthier, and more productive through innovations in medicine, filtration, process improvement, and energy. He leads a team that empowers Madison Industries’ companies to discover scientific breakthroughs, advance the field of medicine, and develop safer environments. Operating rooms, drug delivery equipment, medical testing, and places where people work and play are all safer by its companies.

The common theme of all the companies within Madison Industries is that they deliver on at least one of the three core missions of Madison:

1. They make the world safer, with products ranging from drug delivery equipment to medical testing, to operating room equipment.
2. They make the world healthier, through better drinking water, cleaner air, or a small carbon footprint.
3. They make the world more productive, by increasing speed of production, extending product life, or optimizing a process to use less energy.

In short, Madison Industries is a wonderful example of a business being purpose-driven. Larry Gies has created a culture in which people are motivated not only by financial success, but also by having a major positive impact on the world. They have truly delivered on the adage of “doing well by doing good.”

His business success places him in rarified air along the side of other great entrepreneurs and business leaders of the 21st century. Rather than using that financial success to pursue conspicuous consumption, Mr. Gies has used his skills, contacts, and financial resources to pursue social good.

Even before he was financially successful, Gies dedicated time to giving back to the community in Chicago. As a young adult, he started volunteering at the Chicago Jesuit Academy (CJA), a full-scholarship school for children in third through eighth grades on Chicago’s West side. There are so many stories of him helping students one-on-one, in addition to providing strategic guidance to school leaders. As he became more financially successful, his money followed his passion for expanding educational opportunities, and he eventually became the lead financial supporter of the school. There is now a Gies Campus for the Chicago Jesuit Academy owing to his philanthropic efforts.

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 of the University of Illinois System concurs with this recommendation.

The president of the University of Illinois System recommends approval.