

David N. Shane '70
Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters

Presented May 14, 2017

David N. Shane, honored son of Wabash, we take great pride in putting you under the bright spotlight today. For a man of soaring intellect and superior strategic prowess, we know that public recognition is not your strong suit. But it is high time that we pay tribute to all that you have meant to your alma mater over the arc of your life.

Evansville native, English major, football team leader, proud member of Phi Gamma Delta, Junior Peck Medal recipient, and Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Wabash, you taught school after graduation in 1970, a nod to the numerous future contributions you would make to strengthen education in Indiana. Law school beckoned. After graduation from Duke University Law School, you began your legal career with the Indianapolis law firm, Baker and Daniels, but remained deeply connected to Wabash. Service as a Class Agent, Board member of the National Association of Wabash Men, and as the College's chief legal counsel followed.

Professionally, you have been an attorney, chief executive, and public servant, but throughout your life, you have committed to improving education in this state — from kindergarten to college, including enhancing our state's workforce development efforts. You left law practice to serve as President of Citizens Allied for Superior Schools, along with board memberships that included the Indiana State Board of Education, The Mind Trust, Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts, Indiana University School of Informatics, Indianapolis Charter School Board, and the Indiana Education Round Table. All of your efforts have focused on helping each learner — *at every level* — achieve educational results that prepare them for further education or life in a society defined by change. Your focus is — and always has been — human capital development as a force for good.

Clay Robbins, Wabash Class of 1979 and CEO of Lilly Endowment, calls you a “one-man informal clearinghouse and convener for educational entrepreneurs seeking to improve education opportunities in Indiana.”

A voracious reader, careful listener, and quiet force, you have provided wise and thoughtful counsel to no fewer than four Wabash presidents, and in 1996, you were elected to the Wabash College Board of Trustees. That simply deepened your commitment to strengthening your alma mater — as Chair of the Academic Affairs and Executive committees and as Co-Chair of at least three Strategic Planning efforts. President Andy Ford said he was “always grateful for your wisdom, concern, coaching, gentle prodding, and dropping of hints.” President Pat White praised your “passionate and committed service” and your “proven track record of wisdom and leadership.” In 2002, you were honored with the Frank W. Misch Award for service to the College. You also received the David Peck Senior Medal for Eminence in Law.

In 2005, you took a two-year leave as Trustee to serve in the administration of Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels, who called you his “most valuable advisor on education and workforce development.” Mitch, himself a Wabash Honorary Degree recipient, said that you provided “tremendous service to Indiana,” and that your “expertise in education and workforce development has only grown since, and that you continue to contribute your remarkable talents to the benefit of all Hoosiers.”

You returned to the Board in 2007 — just in time to assist new Board Chair Steve Bowen in helping Wabash navigate through some of our most volatile times. Along with your Trustee colleague John Fox, you helped craft a strategic plan that would help Wabash through the Great Recession and imagine a future built on a strong academic and financial foundation. John says that while you call him “Yoda,” you have been “the real Yoda of our Board since you began your service.” In any conversation, you listen intently, always thinking, never wearing down, and when there is a lull, you clearly and concisely state the issue, perspectives, challenges, and solutions. As John says, “When you speak, there is substantive thought behind every word and people listen.”

Behind the scenes, you guide and mentor younger Trustee colleagues, presidents, faculty members, and even politicians without public recognition. You manage to make so many people feel honored, respected, cared for, and of sincere interest to you in ways that are truly inspiring and worthy of our deepest respect.

David N. Shane, your indefatigable spirit, passion for education and all-things Wabash, brilliant mind, and superior problem solving skills have been true gifts you have freely shared with your alma mater, your city, this state, and our region. For serving as a protector of the value of a rigorous liberal arts education, all at Wabash extend our sincere gratitude.

Therefore, by the authority vested in me by the Board of Trustees of Wabash College and delegated to that Board by the State of Indiana, I do hereby confer upon you the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities thereunto appertaining, of which this citation shall be a permanent witness.

Gregory D. Hess
President