

WABASH COLLEGE

Patrick E. White Doctor of Humane Letters

Patrick E. White, you became the 15th president of Wabash College after a distinguished career as a professor of literature and Dean of Saint Mary's College. As it turned out, your timing could not have been worse. Not long after your inauguration, colleges and universities across the country were shaken by sudden and unforeseen convulsions in the marketplace. Hiring freezes, spending limits, and program cutbacks were everywhere imposed, including at Wabash. In those difficult times, you must have asked yourself: "How did I get into this?" and "How do I get out of it?" In fact, you rose to the occasion. Although you had no expertise in dealing with financial hardship, by putting to good use your own liberal arts education, you not only stabilized the College, but then with a steady hand, you led it through a period of significant accomplishment, the highlight of which was the successful completion — a year ahead of schedule — of the Challenge of Excellence capital campaign. Through it all, you showed us that Pat White, like Wabash, always fights. Always.

In your 2007 inaugural address, you reminded us that, "Tradition at Wabash does not mean inertia [or] a repetition of the past ... [for] tradition at Wabash is paradoxically a tradition of change and innovation." You have extended that tradition by creating, among other things, dual-degree programs with Indiana University and Purdue University, a business leaders program, and the Placher Fund for Faculty Development. Recognizing early in your tenure that small colleges needed to work together for their mutual benefit, you obtained funding for and then launched, in partnership with DePauw University, an Asian Studies program. You have pursued similarly beneficial partnerships with Fudan University in China and Harlaxton College in England.

In your inaugural address, you made reference to William Butler Yeats in articulating what became a major theme of your presidency. Stating that "In dreams begins responsibility," you called upon Wabash students and indeed, upon all of us, to be responsible for living out our best imagination of ourselves and our College. Since then you have pushed Wabash students to pursue and achieve excellence both in and outside the classroom. Each year as you rang in freshmen, you encouraged them to shake hands with those around them because, in your words: "These young men will be your teachers and become sacred in your memory for years and years to come." In countless ways, you have shown that you believe in Wabash students, and in so doing, you have inspired them to believe in themselves.

Further, you have challenged Wabash students to live up to the highest ideals of our Mission Statement and the Gentleman's Rule. Wabash men, you said in one of your many Chapel Talks, "recognize that in the defining terms of citizen and gentleman lie a lifelong

project of critical thinking and exploration of ethics, art, and culture reaching for a complete understanding of what it means to be a gentleman, what it means to be a citizen.” You have modeled those high ideals; you have shown us time and time again what it means to think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively, and live humanely.

For your leadership and love of Wabash College and its people, we are proud to honor you, Patrick E. White, on this Commencement Day 2013.

Therefore, by the authority vested in me as Chairman of 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.

Stephen S. Bowen '68
Chairman of the Wabash College Board of Trustees
May 12, 2013