

On the occasion of the conferring of
the degree of
Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*
upon

Norma Mickelson

The public education experiment has been one of the most radical of the Western world. It takes *more* than a village to educate a child, especially if we want to ensure that *all* children live up to their inborn potential.

In any society we find a power inequity. The true measure of the powerful is how they treat the powerless.

In a public education system, the doors are opened and pupils learn with teachers. There is much to learn both in school and out. As William Butler Yeats said, “education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”

Dr. Norma Mickelson knows that one of the best ways to light the educational fire in the belly of a child is to foster literacy skills. But a child does not learn to read alone. There is a role for the education system, the parents, and the teacher. None of these can give up when a child encounters difficulty in acquiring these skills so crucial to life in the 21st century.

As that renowned educational researcher Pete Seeger said, “Education is when you read the fine print. Experience is what you get if you don't.”

Norma Mickelson has been teacher, scholar, administrator, chancellor, and mentor. She has fought to ensure the fair treatment of the less powerful, and has shared her knowledge with generosity and tenacity.

Eminent Chancellor, I present to you Norma Mickelson, dedicated gift-giver of literacy to thousands of children.

Let us recognize this educator who has led so many to the realization that true power comes from within.

On behalf of the Senate and the University, I invite you to invest Norma Mickelson with the Degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.

8 June 2005

