

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**UNIVERSITY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**UDC Resolution 2016-\_\_\_\_\_**

**SUBJECT: Conferral of Honorary Degree upon David Levering Lewis, Ph.D., Julius Silver University Professor and Professor of History, New York University**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to D.C. Code §38-1202.06(3), the Board of Trustees has authority to award degrees and to establish policy with respect to the award of degrees; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to 8 DCMR §315.2, the President, upon consultation with the Faculty Senate, has recommended that David Levering Lewis be awarded an honorary degree for his outstanding scholarship and significant accomplishments over 50 years as a teacher, historian and author of 11 books and whose research and excellence in writing have earned him innumerable honors and prestige, including two Pulitzer Prizes for the history of noted Black intellectual and social activist W.E. DuBois, as well as the National Humanities Medal awarded by President Obama in 2009; and for his dedication to higher education and teaching, accomplished at various universities across the nation, including the University of the District of Columbia (1970 – 1980); and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to 8 DCMR §315.3, the Board of Trustees must approve the recommendation of David Levering Lewis by an affirmative vote of three-fourths ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) of the members present at the meeting of the Board following the meeting at which the recommendation was made;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Trustees of the University of the District of Columbia hereby approves the recommendation of the awarding of the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, with all the honors, privileges, and duties pertaining thereto.

Approved by the Executive Committee:

March 22, 2016

Ratified by the Board of Trustees:

April 26, 2016

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Elaine A. Crider  
Chairperson of the Board



Office of the Chief Financial Officer

Donald L. Rickford  
Chief Financial Officer

### FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

**TO:** The Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Donald L. Rickford, Chief Financial Officer *DLR*  
Office of the Chief Financial Officer (UDC)

**DATE:** March 14, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Honorary Degree upon David Levering Lewis, Ph.D.

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#### Conclusion

The Office of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer at the University of the District of Columbia approves this request based on the information provided. We do not anticipate any fiscal impact.

#### Background

The President, upon consultation with the Faculty Senate, has recommended that David Levering Lewis be awarded an honorary degree for his outstanding scholarship and significant accomplishments over 50 years as a teacher, historian and author of 11 books and whose research and excellence in writing have earned him innumerable honors and prestige, including two Pulitzer Prizes for the history of noted Black intellectual and social activist W.E. Du Bois, as well as the National Humanities Medal awarded by President Obama in 2009; and for his dedication to higher education and teaching, accomplished at various universities across the nation, including the University of the District of Columbia (1970 – 1980).

Dr. Lewis is being recognized for his outstanding scholarship and significant accomplishments as a teacher, historian and author whose research and excellence in writing have earned him innumerable honors and prestige. In over 50 years as a professor of history and author, he has produced seminal works on Martin Luther King and W.E. Du Bois, earning the Pulitzer Prize for each volume of his Du Bois history, a very rare feat.

Dr. Lewis has dedicated his life to academia, serving students at several prestigious universities around the country and overseas, including Columbia, Rutgers, and the University of the District of Columbia. Dr. Lewis, through his excellent scholarship, teaching, and writings, has left an indelible mark on history and serves as an outstanding example and source of inspiration for the University's students, no matter what their field of study.

Proposed Recipient of Honorary Degree for  
UDC's Spring Commencement, May 14, 2016

**David Levering Lewis, Ph.D.**  
Julius Silver University Professor and Professor of History  
New York University

Dr. Lewis is being recognized for his outstanding scholarship and significant accomplishments as a teacher, historian and author whose research and excellence in writing have earned him innumerable honors and prestige. In over 50 years as a professor of history and author, he has produced seminal works on Martin Luther King and W.E. DuBois, earning the Pulitzer Prize for each volume of his DuBois history, a very rare feat. Dr. Lewis has dedicated his life to academia, serving students at several prestigious universities around the country and overseas, including Columbia, Rutgers, and the University of the District of Columbia. Dr. Lewis, through his excellent scholarship, teaching, and writings, has left an indelible mark on history and serves as an outstanding example and source of inspiration for the University's students, no matter what their field of study. For representing UDC's values so well, we are proud to honor his achievements.

**David Levering Lewis** is the Julius Silver University Professor and Professor of History at New York University. Born into an education-focused family (his father was the first African-American graduate of the Yale Divinity School, and ultimately became president of Morris Brown College, in Atlanta, GA), Dr. Lewis gained early admission at age fifteen to Fisk University in Nashville, TN, from where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1956. He served briefly in the U.S. Army as a psychiatric technician and private first class in Landstuhl, Germany (1961-1962), before beginning his illustrious career in academia, first as a lecturer on medieval African history at the University of Ghana, before returning to the U.S. where he taught at Morgan State University, the University of Notre Dame, Howard University, and the University of the District of Columbia (from 1970 to 1980 as associate and full professor). Dr. Lewis has also served as professor of history at University of California at San Diego for several years, then joined Rutgers University as the Martin Luther King Jr. Professor of History (1985), and in 2003 was appointed the Julius Silver University Professor and Professor of History at New York University, where he still teaches.

A renowned historian and author of eleven books to date, Dr. Lewis's work can best be characterized as comparative history. He wrote the first academic biography of Martin Luther King, Jr., published in 1970 and still in print, less than two years after King's assassination. Other works include: *Prisoners of Honor: The Dreyfus Affair* (1974); *The Bicentennial History of the District of Columbia* (1976); and *When Harlem Was in Vogue*, a monograph on the cultural politics of race relations in the 1920s and early 30s (in 1980). While at Rutgers, he wrote his two volume-biography of W. E. B. Du Bois (1994 and 2001), winning a Pulitzer Prize for each volume, and also finished writing *The Race to Fashoda: European Colonialism and African Resistance in the Scramble for Africa* (1987). The shock of the 9/11 events inspired Lewis's ambitious interpretation of the first interface of Islam and Christendom, *God's Crucible: Islam and the Making of Europe, 570-1215*, published in 2008 and translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Korean, Croatian.

He has received numerous fellowships, including the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, the National Humanities Center, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the American Philosophical Society, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. He was president of the Society of American Historians in 2002, and in spring 2008. President Barack Obama awarded him the 2009 National Humanities Medal at the White House on February 25, 2010.

After earning his undergraduate degree at Fisk, Dr. Lewis briefly attended the University of Michigan Law School but left to attend Columbia University, where he earned his M.A. in history in 1959, and subsequently went to the London School of Economics for his doctorate, earning his Ph.D. in 1962 in modern European and French history.

**UDC VALUES**

*Learning, discovery, and engagement \* Academic excellence \* High expectations \* Student success  
Innovation \* Cross-cultural and international perspectives \* Technological competencies  
Collaboration among our internal and external partners \* Public service*