PROPOSAL: Honorary Degree Recommendation for Audrey Morean Petersen

Background

Mrs. Audrey Morean Petersen, co-founder of Jabil Circuit, received nomination and was approved by the Honorary Degree Committee for consideration of an Honorary Degree at Western Michigan University. In addition to her role in launching Jabil, a multi-billion dollar electronic product solutions company, Mrs. Petersen is renowned as an influential philanthropist as well as an accomplished visual artist. Although she never attended college due to family obligations, Mrs. Petersen has been a staunch advocate for higher education. Both of her children attended WMU and were driving forces in Jabil’s growth into a global company with more than 200,000 employees in 29 countries. As a tribute to Audrey’s artistry and her many other accomplishments, the Audrey Morean Petersen Endowed Graduate Fellowship has been established in the WMU College of Fine Arts. The endowment will fund, in perpetuity, fellowships for outstanding students in the art of ceramics. Among her philanthropic works, Mrs. Petersen bestowed a transformational gift to establish the Smart Room program at NCH Healthcare System in Naples, Florida, which uses technology to dramatically improve emergency healthcare for current and future generations. Mrs. Peterson’s story, based on a philosophy that each of us has a responsibility to help others, is a legacy that aligns with WMU’s mission and ethos.

Recommended Action

It is recommended the Board of Trustees approve awarding Audrey Morean Petersen the Doctor of Laws, honoris causa (L.L.D.) for her achievements as an international business pioneer, artist, higher education advocate and philanthropist.