

**Agendum
Oakland University
Board of Trustees Formal Session
February 7, 2025**

**APPROVAL OF HONORARY DEGREE FOR IRENE MILLER
A Recommendation**

1. **Division and Department:** Academic Affairs, Office of the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.

2. **Introduction:** In accordance with Article IX of the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees, honorary degrees may be awarded by the Board of Trustees in recognition of distinguished accomplishment and service within the scope of the arts and letters, sciences, professions, and public service as recognized and supported by the University. The awarding of honorary degrees reaffirms Oakland University's scholarly, creative, and humanitarian values and ties the University to the community at large.

Irene Miller's contributions both professionally and in public service over decades, have impacted tens of thousands of people globally. Irene has spent decades as an author, speaker, and educator. Her memoir, *Into No Man's Land*, shares her inspiring story of will, chance, survival, and persistence and is used in classrooms across the country. She is a sought-after speaker who has carried her message of courage, determination, and the power of the human spirit to promote tolerance.

Irene has served in roles as the Director, of Eleonore Hutzel Recovery Center at the Detroit Medical Center; Mental Health Program Director, Detroit Osteopathic, and Director and Chief Administrative Officer for the Livingston County Community Mental Health, Howell, MI. She also served on the advisory committee of the Child Welfare League of America, in Washington, DC, and was also appointed by the Michigan Director of Public Health, to assist on a special task force in formulating managed care services and systems for drug-addicted populations in Michigan. In 1998, Irene received the "Quality Service Award for Outstanding Service" in the field of mental health and substance abuse by the Detroit Area Program Directors. She has served in volunteer roles as a member of the American Public Health Association, American College of Health Care Executives, The Economic Club of Detroit, Detroit Women's Forum, The American Cancer Society, and the United Health Organization, to name a few. Irene is currently a docent at the Detroit Institute of Arts when she is not busy spreading her message around the country. As an educator and social psychologist, she has been an advocate, elevating the need to address mental health issues through various roles throughout her esteemed career.

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Irene now travels across the country as a Holocaust survivor, delivering messages of tolerance and acceptance toward others. Irene uses her experience to promote tolerance and acceptance of diversity because her life story is not only a dark story in human history, but an example of how we can learn from our experiences and accept our differences. Irene was interviewed and recorded for Spielberg's Visual History Foundation. A PBS documentary, "Irene; Child of the Holocaust" premiered in December 2016, and she took part in "Shoah Ambassadors" a PBS movie in 2021. She has been written up in many newspapers all over the States, but her primary outreach has been to speak in many high schools, universities, and public appearances. She has spoken at the US Naval Academy, NASA, and in Washington, DC among many other sites.

Based on her enormous contributions to society we recommend that Irene Miller be awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa from the College of Arts and Sciences at the 9:00 AM ceremony on Thursday, May 1, 2025.

3. **Previous Board Action:** The Board of Trustees periodically awards honorary degrees at its Formal Sessions.
4. **Budget Implications:** None.
5. **Educational Implications:** The awarding of honorary degrees is an established tradition in academe, by which the University reaffirms its scholarly, creative, and humanitarian values and its ties to the wider community.
6. **Personnel Implications:** None.
7. **University Reviews/Approvals:** The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost has recommended approval of the recipient to receive an Honorary Degree.
8. **Recommendation:**

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees award the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters *Honoris Causa* to Irene Miller.

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9. Attachments: None.

Submitted to the President

on 1/28/25, 2025 by



Kevin J. Corcoran, Ph.D.
Interim Executive Vice President for
Academic Affairs and Provost

Recommended on 1/30, 2025
to the Board for Approval by



Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, M.D.
President

Reviewed by



Joshua D. Merchant, Ph.D.
Chief of Staff and
Secretary to the Board of Trustees