



Item: II.

April 21, 2015

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF HONORARY DOCTORATE

PROPOSED BOARD ACTION

Approve the conferral of an Honorary Doctorate on Irwin Stovroff.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

University Policy 2.3 (Honorary Doctorates) provides that honorary doctorates may be awarded to persons of high achievement. Honorary degrees recognize sustained achievement of lasting significance in certain specified areas, one of which is high distinction in public service. One candidate is being recommended for this honor at this time.

Irwin Stovroff is a highly decorated World War II veteran who was shot down in this 35th combat mission over Europe and held for more than a year in a Nazi POW camp. Among other awards, Mr. Stovroff received the Distinguished Flying Cross. After the war, he returned home, went to school, got married, raised a family and had a successful career. Retiring to Boca Raton at the age of 75, he started volunteering at the Veterans Administration Hospital. In 2007 he learned that veterans with PTSD were suffering for years with nightmares, panic attacks, flashbacks, mood disorders and quite often addictions; and that the VA was not paying for service dogs. To address this need, Mr. Stovroff worked tirelessly to found Vets Helping Heroes, a nonprofit dedicated to providing assistance dogs for active duty military and retired personnel veterans recovering from the physical and psychological challenges they suffered as a result of their service to our country.

Through Vets Helping Heroes, Mr. Stovroff has raised millions of dollars to help train and match service canines with wounded combat veterans. Some of the matched dogs are seeing-eye dogs for veterans suffering vision disabilities, some help detect oncoming seizures, and others help their veteran companions cope with post-traumatic stress.

A book, *An Extraordinary Life ... Gone To The Dogs*, was inspired by Mr. Stovroff's life. A documentary film, *The Gift of Life*, also tells his story. U.S. Representative Ted Deutch has recognized him on the floor of the United States House of Representatives and read his

compelling life story into the Congressional Record. In 2013, the City of Boca Raton named April 22nd "Irwin Stovroff Day."

In accordance with FAU's Honorary Doctorates Policy, Mr. Stovroff has been recommended to receive an Honorary Doctorate by the University Faculty Senate Honors and Awards Committee, Provost Perry, and President Kelly.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN/DATE

If approved, this Honorary Doctorate will be conferred at a Spring 2015 commencement ceremony.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

Supporting Documentation:

N/A

Presented by:

**Dr. Gary Perry, Provost
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