

BOARD OF REGENTS
EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

RECOMMENDATION

SECTION: 9
DATE: April 14, 2011

COMMENCEMENT SPEAKERS AND HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS:

ACTION REQUESTED

It is recommended that the Board of Regents approve Steven Tapper, successful business executive, entrepreneur, and EMU alumnus, as Commencement Speaker at the Saturday, April 16, 2011 morning commencement ceremony. In addition, it is recommended that the Board award an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts to Mr. Tapper.

It is also recommended that the Board of Regents approve Robert Skandalaris, entrepreneur, author, philanthropist, and EMU alumnus, as Commencement Speaker at the Saturday, April 16, 2011 afternoon commencement ceremony. In addition, it is recommended that the Board award an honorary Doctor of Public Service to Mr. Skandalaris.

SUMMARY

Mr. Tapper's and Mr. Skandalaris' biographies follow on the next page.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

None

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION

The proposed Board action has been reviewed and it is recommended for Board approval.

University Executive Officer
Provost and Executive Vice President

2-31-2011

Date

Steven Tapper

Steven Tapper is a partner and vice president of Tapper's Diamonds and Fine Jewelry, based in West Bloomfield. Prior to joining his family's business, Tapper studied at The Center for Creative Studies in Detroit.

In 1973, he spent the year living and working on a Kibbutz in Israel before returning home to complete his undergraduate degree at Eastern Michigan University. Tapper received a dual degree in education with an emphasis in fine arts education, including a focus on ceramic design and photography.

"As a graduate of Eastern Michigan University, I use the knowledge and experience that I gained while earning my degree in fine arts, and education to guide me in my career choices. Each day I use the skill sets developed through my education as I move forward.

My personal life is dedicated to a wide range of creative pursuits whether in business, social networking, sales development, or my hands-on involvement with custom jewelry design. I participate in the development of advertising, marketing and fashion merchandising while monitoring industry trends, including the changing methods of materials and manufacturing. I also play an integral role in the training of sales associates and customer service representatives."

Tapper's art has been part of group and individual exhibitions and has been included in a variety of corporate and private collections.

He is active in the community, as a business partner contributing and mentoring as a volunteer with the Detroit Public Schools; as a board member of the West Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce; and with the West Bloomfield Optimist Club.

Tapper resides in West Bloomfield with his wife, Patti, who also is an artist and designer. They are the parents of three children; Julia Meryl, Alexander David and Shayna Rose.

Robert J. Skandalaris

Robert J. Skandalaris is the principal and chief executive officer of Quantum Ventures of Michigan, LLC, a privately held merchant banking firm specializing in the acquisition and development of middle-market companies. Quantum currently has investments in various industries including distribution, software, specialty chemicals, industrial equipment manufacturing, financial services, digital media and various interactive providers.

In 1994, Skandalaris founded Noble International, Ltd. He served as chairman and CEO of Noble during its growth years. At the time of the sale of his interest to Arcelor Mittal in March 2008, Noble had become the world's largest supplier of laser-weld blanks with revenue in excess of \$1 billion.

In 1989, Skandalaris co-founded Michigan's largest private bank holding company, which was subsequently sold to Private Bancorp, Inc. in 2005.

Skandalaris purchased a small New York-based asset management firm in 1987. Under his direction as chairman and CEO, it grew from \$45 million to more than \$2 billion in assets under management at the time of its sale in 1994. In 1987, he also became a shareholder and Vice Chairman of the Oxford Investment Group, Inc. which grew to over \$1 billion in revenue when he exited in 1993.

He joined Prudential-Bache Securities in 1982 where he eventually became Senior Vice President of Investments and a member of the firm's Chairman's Counsel. After receiving an MS in accounting from EMU in 1976, Skandalaris began his career as a Certified Public Accountant in the tax department at Touche Ross & Co.

Skandalaris and his wife (Julie) believe in the value of education and the need to support entrepreneurship in the United States. As a result, they maintain a private foundation that grants scholarships to future leaders attending high school and college. To date, more than 1,000 scholarships have been granted.

Skandalaris also established the Skandalaris Center for Entrepreneurial Studies at Washington University in St. Louis, which has been recognized as one of the top ten entrepreneurship programs in the country. He is a trustee of Washington University, chairs the Athletic Advisory Board at Michigan State University, serves on several community and private company boards and is the author of three books about the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship to the American way of life. His most recent book is "The Evolution of the American Dream."