

BOARD OF REGENTS
EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

SECTION: 10
DATE:
October 30, 2012

RECOMMENDATION

COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER AND HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS:

ACTION REQUESTED

It is recommended that the Board of Regents approve Mr. Howdy S. Holmes, former driver in the CART Championship Car series and President of Chelsea Milling Company, as Commencement Speaker at the Sunday, December 16, 2012 commencement ceremony. In addition, it is recommended that the Board award an honorary Bachelor of Science and honorary Doctor of Business Administration to Mr. Holmes.

It is also recommended that the Board of Regents award an honorary Doctor of Education to Mr. Phillip Jenkins, philanthropist and founder of Sweepster, Inc. at the Sunday, December 16, 2012 commencement ceremony.

SUMMARY

Mr. Holmes' and Mr. Jenkins' 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 Vice President

Date

Howard S. “Howdy” Holmes

Howard S. “Howdy” Holmes III, president and CEO of [Chelsea Milling Company](#), is the eighth-generation Holmes in the business of flour milling, the fourth generation in Chelsea, Michigan, and the third generation to market the company’s Jiffy mixes, the first of which was created by his grandmother in 1930.

Holmes delayed entry into the family business while pursuing a 20-year-long racing career that saw him compete six times in the Indianapolis 500, where he was rookie of the year in 1979. He raced in the CART series for 7 seasons (1979-1980, 1982-1985, and 1988), with 72[1] career starts, including the Indianapolis 500 each of those years except 1980. He finished in the top ten 26 times, with his best finish in 2nd position in 1984 at Phoenix. In 1978, he was the Formula Atlantic champion.

Holmes retired from racing after the 1988 season. He revamped the business, which had been a sole proprietorship, and brought in modern management practices emphasizing teamwork, equality, and an open-door policy. During our hour-long interview, he was interrupted by a sales staff member and later by the company’s technical director, who had one bag of devil’s food cake mix with shortening and another evidently without for Holmes’s inspection. They discussed the volume, color, and texture of the mixes.

Despite being a modern business executive, Holmes made the decision to eschew the use of a personal computer, and he says many have expressed envy at the amount of free time he must have today.

Besides his business career, racing also caused him to delay marriage, and he wed late, in 1986, before becoming the father of one son, Howard S. Holmes II, also known as Howdy. Howdy II will be a senior in college in the fall and is working at the company for the fifth summer.

Phil Jenkins

Phil Jenkins is from Dexter, Michigan where he took over the family farm equipment business in 1949. Soon after he collaborated on the preliminary design of the current attachable, walk-behind, self-propelled and airport runway sweepers for all types of equipment used in airports, municipalities, agriculture and construction around the globe, and thus his company Sweepster, Inc. was born.

He is a long standing member of the Depression Center's National Advisory Board and has donated numerous large gifts to EMU and the University of Michigan toward treatment and prevention of depression, including \$2 million to support the research of a Depression Center scientist, \$2 million for a new building to house the Center (due to open this fall), and an endowed professorship at the Center.

Part of his motivation for giving a gift for a professorship bearing his name, says Jenkins, is to encourage others whose lives have been touched by depression to give to the U-M Depression Center as well. "I used to give anonymously, but now give under my name," he says. "I want others to say, 'If he does it I'll do it.'"

In addition to his gifts to the Depression Center, Mr. Jenkins has also supported several other areas of the University of Michigan's Health System, including the Department of Urology, as well as non-profit organizations such as the Neutral Zone teen center and the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum.