

WEST VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Meeting of April 28, 2011

ITEM: Conferring of the Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree to The Honorable Donald L. Graham

AREA: University-wide

PRESENTER: Dr. Hazo W. Carter, Jr., President
West Virginia State University

RECOMMENDED ACTION: BOG approval to award the Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree to The Honorable Donald L. Graham at West Virginia State University's spring commencement exercises on Sunday, May 15, 2011.

BACKGROUND:

The Honorable Donald L. Graham, graduated magna cum laude from West Virginia State University (then College) in 1971 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. He went on to earn the Juris Doctorate degree from the Ohio State University College of Law in 1974. Judge Graham was appointed to the United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida on September 16, 1991 by President George H.W. Bush.

Upon graduation from the Ohio State University College of Law, Judge Graham joined the Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps, United States Army, in Charlottesville, Virginia. In the JAG Corps, he served as an Assistant Staff Judge Advocate at Homestead Air Force Base, Homestead, Florida; an Assistant Staff Judge Advocate Officer in Charge, Gelnhausen Legal Center, West Germany; and as a Prosecuting and Defense Counsel, Third Armored Division, Frankfurt, West Germany. During the same time period, he was an Adjunct Instructor at the University of Maryland-European Division, Hanau, West Germany.

From 1979 to 1984, Judge Graham served as an Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida in Miami, Florida. While with the U.S. Attorney's Office, he was Chief of the Special Prosecutions Division, Chief of the Major Narcotics Traffickers Section, Chief of the Intake Unit, and on Special Assignment with the Department of Justice Organized Crime and Racketeering Section (Miami Strike Force). In 1984, Judge Graham left the United States Attorney's Office to become a founding partner of the law firm Raskin & Graham, P.A. He remained in private practice until he was appointed to the federal bench in 1991.

Judge Graham has received numerous awards and academic honors. He was a West Virginia Board of Regents Distinguished Military Graduate and a member of the Alpha Kappa Mu National Honor Society. During law school, Judge Graham was a member of the Honor Council, a Moot Court Best Oralist Award recipient, and a recipient of the Judge Harter Memorial Hooding Award as the Outstanding Trial Practice student. Judge Graham also received a Special Achievement Award while with the Department of Justice as well as a Certificate of Merit from the Dade County Bar Association. Additionally, Judge Graham is the recipient of the United States Army Commendation Medal with First, Second, Third and Fourth Oak Leaf Clusters, and a United States Army Achievement Medal. During West Virginia State University's 2010 Homecoming, Judge Graham was inducted into the WVSU ROTC Hall of Fame.