



Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa

Citation

William H. Gates III, you have changed the world twice: by making information technology accessible to people everywhere on earth and by providing medical care, education, and economic opportunity where it is desperately needed.

Your vision has opened expansive vistas of knowledge and information in homes and businesses worldwide. From this wellspring, through your immense generosity—of resources and spirit—you have brought health and hope to those struggling to survive.

You have revolutionized how—and how fast—we communicate, thereby altering fundamentally how we think and learn. Science today advances at unprecedented speeds, and you have played an indispensable role in that exponential shift. For envisioning the future of personal computing and developing the software to realize that future, you were named a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1992, received the National Medal of Technology in that same year, and were elected to the National Academy of Engineering in 1996.

While your successes grew in a highly complex and competitive field, you never lost sight of the importance and experience of every individual, no matter where or in what circumstances they lived. Your goal has been to enrich the lives of others, to empower them so they might prosper. As Microsoft flourished, a vision for how its fortune could transform the world emerged, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation was born.

Through the Foundation, you have brought together private enterprise, government, and philanthropy to battle global disease, poverty, and inequality in ways that are ingenious, uniquely strategic, and extraordinarily successful.

Your support of AIDS research, prevention and treatment has meant great progress towards defeating a worldwide epidemic. Over 100 million children in developing countries have been vaccinated against a variety of deadly diseases thanks to your Foundation's support of the GAVI Alliance. In our own region, the Sound Families Initiative, launched with Gates Foundation funding, is making affordable housing and social services available to the homeless of Puget Sound, and Thrive By Five is giving young children the early learning opportunities they need to realize their full potential.

Your support of public education has spurred academic achievement across our nation. Our own University's Mary Gates Endowment for Students has helped thousands of talented undergraduates blossom as leaders, artists, scholars, and scientists.

Your philanthropy and influence as a citizen of the world are unmatched in history. Yet your greatest gift is compassion, your greatest legacy an unassailable optimism and a steadfast belief in the power of the human mind and spirit to solve the problems that beset the peoples of our planet. You are proof that the power of imagination can lift the dreams of millions toward a brighter tomorrow.

For your leadership and dedication, for your courage and compassion, for helping those in need, and for all you have done to bring dignity and hope to the troubled face of humanity, the University of Washington is proud to confer upon you the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa.

CRAIG W. COLE
CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS

MARK A. EMMERT
PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY

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