



HONORARY DOCTORATE CITATION

Ralph Munro

Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*

Long after officially retiring from three decades in public office, you remain one of Washington state's most admired political figures and public servants. A champion of nonpartisan collaboration, sound government and environmental preservation, you also stand up for the most vulnerable among us. Your lifelong work epitomizes the power of a compassionate life lived for service.

We'd like to think that your family's deep connections to Western Washington University may have contributed in some small way to your taking a path of service. Your grandfather, a Scottish-born stonemason, helped build Old Main in 1896, and your mother attended Western to become a teacher. Perhaps it was destiny that you would someday work your way through Western tending bar at a downtown Bellingham pizza parlor before earning a degree in Political Science and Education in 1966.

You would soon go on to spend much of your career in another building your grandfather helped build, the State Capitol in Olympia, starting in the basement as a supply clerk. In 1975 as an aide to Gov. Dan Evans, you helped coordinate the resettlement of thousands of Vietnamese refugees in the State of Washington, including a few who later would stop you on the street to thank you. As Secretary of State from 1980 to 2001, you promoted major reforms to boost voter participation and modernize the State's election system, and earned a reputation as a tireless coalition builder who helped elevate people above politics in order to face challenges together.

Your life as a private citizen has been guided by that same spirit of empathy and initiative, whether raising money for people with developmental disabilities or leading the charge to ban the capture of orcas in Puget Sound. You traveled to Africa with Rotary International to help vaccinate children against polio and continue to volunteer serving meals to homeless people at Olympia's Salvation Army.

Your service and advocacy on behalf of Western has also been exemplary. Following your retirement from government in 2001, friends and supporters matched a \$250,000 grant from the Higher Education Coordinating Board to fund the Ralph Munro Institute for Civic Education. In 1989, Western recognized you as a Distinguished Alumnus. And, of course, we are so grateful that you served on Western's Board of Trustees from 2009 to 2015.

In recognition of your distinguished career in Washington state, and for representing the highest values of public service, nonpartisanship and dedication to helping the most vulnerable people, Western Washington University is proud to confer upon you the degree of Doctor of Humane letters, *honoris causa*.

Dated this 19th Day of March, 2016

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce Shepard".

Bruce Shepard, President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Lee".

Karen Lee, Chair, Board of Trustees