

Submitted by: Keith E. Whitfield, Provost

REQUEST TO AWARD A POSTHUMOUS DEGREE

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve a request for an exception to statute 2.43.62.040, and posthumously award the Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration, with a Major in Management Information Systems, effective Spring/Summer term, 2018.

Applicable Code

- 2.43.62.020 It may be requested of the University occasionally that academic recognition be bestowed posthumously to a deceased student who did not complete degree requirements and who did not meet the prescribed criteria for an honorary degree. In such a circumstance, the University may, upon request of the family of the subject student and upon approval of the appropriate faculty, confer a degree, if the deceased student had met the requirements as set forth below.
- 2.43.62.040 BACCALAUREATE STUDENTS: To be eligible for these University recognitions, a deceased or critically ill student who, at the time of termination of study, was pursuing a Bachelor Degree, shall have met a minimum of 90 percent of the requirements in each published category: general education, departmental, collegiate, University.

Background

Donovan Dennard was a transfer student from Tennessee State and he had been working on his degree requirements at Wayne State University since Fall 2009. He successfully completed over 120 semester hours and other degree requirements including overall GPA, all general education requirements, and 19 out of 23 classes (83%) required by the major. He was scheduled to meet all degree requirements in one more semester of full-time study when he was killed in a motorcycle accident, before fall term 2017. The following is a statement from Mr. Dennard's mother, Ms. Renee Moore, received via email on March 21, 2018:

Thank you for taking the time out to read this letter. I am writing to you in an effort to receive a posthumous degree for my son Donovan Dennard who was a Business Major student here at Wayne State University. Unfortunately, Donovan was tragically killed on his motorcycle in September 2017 when a driver decided to run a stop sign.

Donovan, born the middle of my three sons lived an extremely responsible life. As early as Middle School, I learned a lot about his perseverance and determination. Donovan had to leave out of the house at 5 am to take three buses to high school. At 6 pm each day he had to use a neighbor's computer to complete his homework and never complained. After spending his first year of college at Tennessee State University and leaving for financial reasons, Donovan started over at Wayne State and lost all his previous credits. At the age of 19, he began his career working full-time with the IRS while carrying a full load at Wayne State University. In the midst of all of this, Donovan was able to receive a first aid training certificate, CPR training certificate, began a software program company and coached a Junior high school Girls Basketball team.

Donovan was also a member of an organization of active young men that hosted events in the community where they passed out book bags to neighboring schools and scholarships to graduating high school students. As if his schedule wasn't full enough, Donovan loved to travel seeing that he visited over 20 states. He was definitely on his way to being a positive role model

and a Grand Marshal in society. I am so proud of him because I learned more about him after his death even though we were living under the same roof. As I heard the stories from people about what he did for them and if it wasn't for him they don't know where they would be, I felt the love that he gave and I still receive the love from all of them now. Donovan had 27 years of a life well lived and I am genuinely blessed, overjoyed and excited to be his mom.

By requiring a 90% threshold in department requirements, the statute effectively limits the possibility of awarding the degree under the statute to students who were only missing a single course. While Mr. Dennard did not meet the letter of the requirement, it should be noted that he was scheduled to meet all degree requirements in one more semester of full-time study.

Approvals

This request is supported by the Dean of the Mike Ilitch School of Business and the Provost.