

**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS**

**Academic and Student Affairs**

**AGENDA ITEM: 3 – B.1**

**DATE: October 6-8, 2015**

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**SUBJECT: Naming Requests – Northern State University Request to Rename the School of Education as the Milicent M. Atkins School of Education.**

Northern State University requests approval to name the School of Education as the “Milicent M. Atkins School of Education” in recognition of a bequest from Milicent M. Atkins amounting to \$15,000,000 to be used to enhance programs and offerings of the NSU School of Education, particularly as these relate to work with children in kindergarten and elementary school, and to support students pursuing degrees in such fields.

The bequest will be held in trust by Dacotah Bank for a period of ten years, and the earnings will be payable through the Northern State University Foundation to support the School of Education. Thereafter, the corpus will pass to the NSU Foundation and held in a quasi-endowment to support the benefitted kindergarten and elementary education programs.

Board Policy No. 1:27 (2) and (3) states the pertinent standards for naming a programmatic unit in conjunction with a donation:

2. When naming a facility or programmatic unit for a person, family, or organization where there is a gift to the institution, consideration shall be given to the following factors:

A. the significance of the gift to the likely realization or success of a facility project or programmatic unit, based on the following guidelines:

...

iii. A name may be proposed for a programmatic unit to recognize an endowed gift to the institution if the gift is similar to donations received for comparable naming at peer institutions,

(Continued)

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

I move to authorize Northern State University to name its School of Education as the “Milicent M. Atkins School of Education” in recognition of her bequest to endow the elementary education programs offered through School of Education.

provided that any associated endowment will be sufficient to sustain the program or a substantial portion of it, since the naming shall be in effect for the life of the program.

...

- v. Before recommending a name in honor of an individual, corporate, or commercial entity, institutions must avoid any appearance of commercial influence or conflict of interest by taking additional due diligence. The naming for an individual associated with a corporation should be handled as any naming for an individual.

...

- B. the urgency or need for the project or program, or continuing support for the program,
- C. the standing of the individual, family, or entity in the community or profession,
- D. the nature and duration of the relationship of the proposed honoree to the university.

3. Prior to recommending to the Board the naming of a facility or programmatic unit for a person, family or organization, the president or superintendent shall have a reasonable assurance that:

- A. the proposed name will bring additional honor and distinction to the institution,
- B. the recognition implied by the naming is appropriate for the behavior exhibited by the individual, family, or organization, and
- C. any philanthropic commitments connected with the naming can be realized.

The university recommends approval of the proposed names under these guidelines without hesitation or reserve.

Milicent M. Atkins was graduated by Northern in 1940 with a degree in Primary and Elementary Education. After teaching in rural schools, Ms. Atkins spent many years acquiring and managing farmland throughout northeastern South Dakota. Her bequest numbered among the most significant made, nationwide, in 2012, and it is the largest ever received by the university.

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NSU will use the income from the bequest to fund to scholarships, classroom technology for primary school classrooms, extended student teaching assignments and support for nontraditional educators in the elementary grades.



northern *State* university

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 3, 2015

TO: Dr. Mike Rush, Executive Director, SDBOR

FROM: James M. Smith, President, NSU

RE: Atkins School of Education

It is with great pleasure that I compose this memorandum requesting permission to name the Northern State University School of Education after Ms. Millicent M. Atkins. As you will see outlined in the attached correspondence from Provost Alan LaFave, Ms. Atkins has provided a tremendous gift (circa \$15,000,000) to said school. Her gift is and will continue to be transformational for the many young men and women who study in the School of Education, both today and well into the future. Ms. Atkins is a 1940 graduate of NSU and gained tremendous wealth, not teaching, although she did teach in rural South Dakota early in her career, but rather by purchasing land and managing outstanding farm acreage in much of Northeastern South Dakota.

Ms. Millicent Atkins has been recognized for this gift by leading publications in South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, and nationally/internationally as well. In fact, the Chronicle of Philanthropy recently highlighted this gift as one of the largest in the United States during that gifting year (2012).

The power of this gift to endow scholarships, bring new technology to the primary/elementary classroom, fund extended student teaching assignments, and bring nontraditional educators into the K-6 classroom will be an organizational blessing for many decades to come.

It is for the aforementioned reasons, and many more, that I request permission from you and the South Dakota Board of Regents to officially name the NSU School of Education, during the October 2015 meeting of the Board, as the Millicent M. Atkins School of Education. Although I never met Ms. Atkins, I know that she would be proud to see her name associated with this long-standing school; one that has worked to professionally prepare teachers for life in public schools since 1901.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



northern *State* university

DATE: September 3, 2015

TO: President James M. Smith  
FROM: Provost Alan LaFave *Alan LaFave*  
RE: Naming of NSU School of Education

The NSU School of Education has a long and distinguished tradition of excellence. Graduates from the SOE are teaching throughout the state of South Dakota and across the nation.

The purpose of this memo is to formally request the naming of the NSU School of Education as "The Millicent M. Atkins School of Education".

A recent and substantial financial gift was made to the SOE by Millicent M. Atkins, in the amount of \$15 million dollars. This is the largest single donation in the history of Northern State University. These funds are being used to benefit the School of Education

Millicent M. Atkins was a graduate from Northern with a degree in Primary and Elementary Education in 1940. Her first teaching position in 1942 was a grade 1-3 classroom in Lebanon, SD. The \$15 million bequest to the NSU School of Education has been earmarked to enhance programs and offerings in the SOE, most specifically, as they relate to work with young children.

According to the Chronicle of Philanthropy in 2012, Ms. Atkins gift to charities were in the "Top 50" gifts in the United States.

Due to the significance of the gift, which will sustain the SOE for perpetuity, we formally request the naming of the NSU School of Education as "The Millicent M. Atkins School of Education".

Thank you for your consideration of this request.