

## *James O. Hansen*

### *Citation for the Regents' Honorary Degree of Doctor of Public Service*

In recognition of extraordinary service and leadership to the state of South Dakota, hallmarked by his exemplary stewardship of the state's systems of public higher education and K-12 education, the South Dakota Board of Regents awards its highest honor, an honorary doctorate in public service, to Dr. James O. Hansen.

Dr. Hansen's 18 years as a member of the South Dakota Board of Regents stand as one of the longest records of service by any Regent. But even prior to his appointment to the Board of Regents on April 1, 1995, Dr. Hansen had already distinguished himself in public service to a state he has called home for more than 84 years.

In a lifetime of good works dedicated to public education in South Dakota, Dr. Hansen began his career as an educator in 1952 at Philip, where he was a high school math and science teacher and coach. He moved on to become superintendent of schools at Wessington, Gregory, and Madison. In 1976, he moved to Pierre and a position in the state education department, where he was assistant state superintendent in charge of instruction, deputy state superintendent, and served twice as state superintendent of schools. He also worked for the South Dakota Department of Labor. In 1985, he was appointed as Secretary of the Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, serving in the administrations of Governor William J. Janklow and Governor George S. Mickelson, before his retirement from the Governor's Cabinet in 1990.

Even though retirement at this point would have been well deserved, Dr. Hansen was not about to rest on his laurels. He went on give more of his time and talents in the public sector, a tradition that continues to the present day. He has served since 1992 on the Capitol Complex Restoration and Beautification Commission, since 1993 on the Board of Trustees for the South Dakota Retirement System, and since 2008 as a commissioner for the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. He has also been tapped for service on many state task forces and study groups over the years.

In his time on the Board of Regents, Dr. Hansen was elected by his peers as the board's secretary (1997, 2009-11), vice president (1997-98), and president (1998-99). During his tenure with the Regents, he has worked with 22 institutional executives at the campus and special schools level. He chaired three presidential search committees, and was a member of the search committee for three other executive searches. He also served on countless building committees for the Board of Regents, overseeing the investment of public and private resources in capital improvements for the betterment of public higher education.

Born in Lead, South Dakota, Dr. Hansen graduated from Spearfish High School, served as a staff sergeant in the U.S. Army Air Forces, and went on to receive his bachelor of science

degree from what was then called Black Hills State Teachers' College. He earned a master's degree from the University of Northern Colorado and his doctorate in educational administration from the University of South Dakota. He also studied at Southern Utah State College, Harvey Mudd College, and the Teachers College of Columbia University, New York.

His honors for public and community service are many, including recognition from the AARP, National Education Association, School Administrators of South Dakota, Retired Teachers' Association, Phi Delta Kappa, South Dakota Beadle Club, Kiwanis Club, and Elks Club. Dr. Hansen has received the School Bell and Friend of Education awards from the South Dakota Education Association and state Parent-Teachers Association.

In recognition thereof, the South Dakota Board of Regents, on behalf of the citizens of South Dakota, bestows upon Dr. James O. Hansen the degree of Honorary Doctor of Public Service, reserved for those individuals whose exceptional personal and professional contributions merit special acknowledgement.