

**RESOLUTION CONFERRING UPON MINNIS E. RIDENOUR  
AN HONORARY DOCTOR OF LETTERS DEGREE**

**WHEREAS**, with a bachelor's degree in marketing and retailing and a master's degree in higher education administration with a focus in finance from the University of Tennessee, Minnis Ridenour joined Virginia Tech in 1974 as Budget Director and Chief Business Officer. He rose through the ranks to the position of Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, which he held until he retired formally in 2004, and he since has continued to serve the university as Senior Fellow for Resource Development; and

**WHEREAS**, Minnis Ridenour's devotion to Virginia Tech and selfless service are unsurpassed. He lives the university's motto, *Ut Prosim*, that I may serve, and early in his tenure at Virginia Tech made a conscious decision that few others would have made: he abandoned his plans to pursue a doctorate—although he surely could have earned one—because he chose to devote his life to the university; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Ridenour has been an advisor to five presidents of the university on all major university initiatives during their tenure, and his expertise in the field of finance enabled him to devise brilliant funding strategies to achieve many initiatives that have benefited Virginia Tech and its students and advanced the reputation of the university. The list of initiatives for which he has provided leadership is exhaustive, and his impact on the university is both profound and enduring; and

**WHEREAS**, for four decades, Minnis has been the architect or a key player in the development of statewide higher education funding policies that have benefited all universities including Virginia Tech, such as the State's maintenance reserve fund, the Higher Education Equipment Trust Fund, the authorization for universities to issue variable rate debt, and the Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act of 2005; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Ridenour is widely known and held in high regard by all the Governors of Virginia with whom he has worked as well as members of the General Assembly and the staffs of the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees. In the words of the chair of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, "Without question, there is no member in the higher education field more knowledgeable than Minnis Ridenour, including presidents of universities"; and

**WHEREAS**, there is perhaps no role more important or meaningful to Minnis Ridenour or one that he takes more seriously than that of teacher and mentor. His guidance is sought by faculty and community members as well as students. He has taught graduate level finance classes during much of his career and invests heavily in talented individuals, setting high expectations for their personal and professional success; and,

**WHEREAS**, Minnis holds an affiliated appointment with the School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA), where he teaches courses on financial management, mentors doctoral students, and has been the driving force in developing a certificate in public and nonprofit financial management. For his impact on building Virginia Tech and SPIA as resilient and sustainable institutions, the Strickler Family honored him with the creation of the Minnis E. Ridenour Faculty Fellowship; and

**WHEREAS**, though Minnis has never sought recognition for his achievements, the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) honored him in 2001 with their National Distinguished Business Officer Award; and

**WHEREAS**, at Minnis Ridenour's retirement celebration in 2004, then-President Steger remarked that, "He is one of the most visionary people of our time . . . He has spent three decades in successively more influential roles practicing his craft, making us a better university, and painting his vision on the fabric of American education"; and

**WHEREAS**, Virginia Tech would be proud to claim Minnis Ridenour among its honorary alumni;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that in tribute to Minnis Ridenour for living the spirit of *Ut Prosim* through his selfless work over more than four decades—mentoring the students, faculty, and staff of Virginia Tech, and advancing the missions of the university and higher education in general across the state and nation while sacrificing his personal dream of pursuing a doctoral degree—the Board of Visitors of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University hereby confers upon Minnis E. Ridenour the Honorary Degree (GRADUM HONORS CAUSA) of Doctor of Letters, which is only the tenth honorary degree awarded in the history of the university.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the above resolution conferring upon Minnis E. Ridenour the rare distinction of an Honorary Doctor of Letters Degree be approved.

March 26, 2018