



Citation

of
Mr. Knüd Søndergaard

on being presented the degree of

DOCTOR OF HUMANE LETTERS

Honoris Causa

Knüd Søndergaard, a citizen of Denmark, has been an ambassador to deaf people in his country, throughout Europe, and around the globe during his long and illustrious career. He is a man of considerable achievements who has made countless contributions to improve the quality of life for the deaf community in many areas, including education, social service, athletics, and government service.

Mr. Søndergaard recently retired as president of the Danish Deaf Association, an organization he has been involved in for most of his life. He also served many years in a number of other influential organizations that advocate for the rights of deaf people. He is a board member of Dovefonden, a foundation that raises funds to support deaf individuals and organizations that serve deaf people. In addition, he is a former board member and president of the European Union of the Deaf, and he held numerous positions on the World Federation of the Deaf, including president of its Commission on Communication, and president of the Commission on Rehabilitation, Social, and Labour Issues.

All of Mr. Søndergaard's involvement in these organizations had one clear objective – to advance and to protect the rights of deaf people. He has worked tirelessly for bilingual education for deaf children, and sign language training for parents, and for teachers and other professionals who serve deaf people. He has also been a key advocate for establishing professional interpreting services in Denmark and for having free text telephones for the country's deaf community.

Mr. Søndergaard has also brought acclaim to the field of deaf sports as an athlete and as an administrator. As a swimmer, he set the Danish record for the 100-meter breaststroke in 1962, and he was goalkeeper for the Danish water polo team at the ninth World Games for the Deaf in Helsinki. As an administrator, his involvement in deaf sports includes serving on the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf as secretary general and as a member of the executive committee. Mr. Søndergaard also held the positions of secretary and president for the Danish Deaf Sports Association, and he has been a member of the Danish World Games Committee.

Awards that Mr. Søndergaard has received during his distinguished career include the Knight Order of Chivalry for meritorious service from Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, the Laurent Clerc Cultural Fund's Edward Miner Gallaudet Award for leaders who work to promote the well-being of deaf people worldwide, the Honorary Gold Pin of the Danish Olympic Committee – the highest award for sports leaders of the federation, and the gold and silver medals from the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf.

For the lasting impression that he has made on the deaf community through his passion, his commitment, and his contributions, Gallaudet University is honored to award the degree Doctor of Humane Letters, Honoris Causa, to Mr. Knüd Søndergaard.