



# CONCORD UNIVERSITY

## DOCTOR OF HUMANITIES, HONORIS CAUSA

Bill Owens, you hold a significant place in the history of Concord University. As Concord's first African-American student-athlete, your presence in the classroom and on the playing field is commendable and is responsible for opening doors for the generations of Concord students who have followed in your footsteps and those yet to embark in athletic pursuits and academic endeavors.

Hailing from the West Virginia community of Giatto, you majored in biology and physical education at Concord. During the 1954 and 1955 football seasons, you played end for the Mountain Lions.

Your career path led you to the Long Beach Memorial Hospital in Long Beach, New York where you worked in the engineering department. A highlight of your time there came in 1973 when you were asked to oversee the building of an addition to the hospital's nursing facility. Following 34 years of service, you retired in 2006. Your civic and community involvement includes service on the city council's Board of Appeals from 1989 to 2002. You nobly served your country in the United States Air Force during the Korean War.

Returning to Concord's campus for Homecoming in 2013, you were recognized with several activities in your honor. As Grand Marshal for the annual Homecoming parade, you led the procession along Vermillion Street. At the Homecoming football game, you were recognized in a pre-game ceremony and as an honorary team captain, when you once again took the field as a Mountain Lion for the official coin toss.

Your unique legacy on "The Campus Beautiful" flourishes today with the young men and women who look to you as a role model and an inspiration for their own days at Concord. The University's Black Student Union presented you with two awards in 2013. For your "contributions to Concord and the African-American communities and students" you received a Lifetime Honorary Membership in the BSU. The Legacy Award recognizes your "contributions as a forerunner for black students of Concord University."

For your distinctive contributions to the heritage of this institution and for your life's accomplishments, Concord University confers upon you, Bill Owens, the degree of Doctor of Humanities, *honoris causa*.

CONFERRED ON  
MAY 7, 2016

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