

VERMONT STATE COLLEGES SYSTEM

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

RESOLUTION 2020-001

Trustee Chair Emerita Status for Martha Hannum O'Connor
for her Long-Standing Commitment to and Support of the Vermont State Colleges System

- WHEREAS, Martha Hannum O'Connor, leader, mentor, colleague and friend, exemplified the core Vermont values of hard work, generosity, pragmatism and humor in her nearly 20 years of service on the Vermont State Colleges System Board of Trustees; and
- WHEREAS, Martha, devoted much of her life to public service, including serving as Chair of the Brattleboro Selectboard and as Chair of the Vermont Lottery Commission; and
- WHEREAS, Martha dedicated years of work to enhancing education in Vermont where she served in capacities at all levels of public education in the State: as an elementary school teacher, Chair of the Brattleboro Union High School Board, Chair of the Vermont State Board of Education and Trustee for the University of Vermont; and
- WHEREAS, Martha was a tireless advocate for the Vermont State Colleges; in her service on the Vermont State Colleges Board, she worked to expand access to higher education programs for all Vermonters, including ensuring a permanent presence for the VSCS in Brattleboro; and
- WHEREAS, Martha's leadership style recognized the need for building consensus and gaining broad support for important decisions, and, when necessary, being able to determine a course of action and carry the Board with her, but always with her affable and eminently straight-forward style; and
- WHEREAS, Martha was selected as Citizen of the Year by both the Brattleboro Chamber of Commerce and the Vermont Chambers of Commerce, and in March of this year received the Vermont State Colleges System Board of Trustees Award for Extraordinary Contribution, presented at a celebration that included four Vermont governors singing her praises; and
- WHEREAS, Martha had unparalleled judgment and a gift at finding the simple—and right—resolution by addressing the core concerns; and
- WHEREAS, Martha's sharp sense of humor provided light and laughter to all who knew and worked with her; her distinctive voice rising to her characteristic laugh, or quietly cracking a subtle joke to lighten the mood in a difficult conversation; and
- WHEREAS, Martha served most proudly in her role as wife and partner to former Speaker of the Vermont House of Representatives and loyal friend of the Vermont State Colleges, Timothy J. O'Connor, with whom she developed multiple successful campaigns and shaped many bright political careers; and
- WHEREAS, Martha was the matriarch of a joyful and loving family whose home in Brattleboro was a gathering place for political aspirants on all levels of government and from across the political spectrum, who came to seek counsel and friendship and the O'Connor seal of approval; and
- WHEREAS, Martha retired from the Board of Trustees following her service as Chair from 2014-2017, then passed away on September 2, 2019; and
- WHEREAS, The nomination of Martha O'Connor for Trustee Chair Emerita status is in accordance with the criteria set forth in Policy 204; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED, That the Board of Trustees hereby posthumously grants Martha Hannum O'Connor the status of Trustee Chair Emerita for the Vermont State Colleges System, in honor of her demonstrated passion for the public education system in Vermont and her long-standing commitment to the the Vermont State Colleges System.

Approved: September 18, 2019

J. Churchill Hindes, Chair of the Board of Trustees