

**Motion to recommend the nomination of Sidney Rittenberg for an honorary degree**

*Resolved*, that the faculty recommend to the president the nomination of Sidney Rittenberg for the honorary degree Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*.

**Rationale**

The Faculty Handbook cites two objectives for the awarding of an honorary doctorate. “The first is to recognize worthy individuals whose lives and work advance the mission of the university. The second is to promote the reputation of the university as an institution which recognizes and encourages such excellence.” The criteria for the award of an honorary degree are further specified as follows: “Nominees must not merely have accomplished a job competently but must have excelled through unusual success in or contribution to their field, through innovation or research which has caused their profession to advance, through extraordinary achievement which has enabled people to live more humanely, or through exemplary efforts to advance the mission of the university.”

In recognition of Sidney Rittenberg’s commitment to building bridges of understanding between people and cultures and his courageous search, frequently at great personal cost, for a better, more just world, the Educational Policies Committee – after consultation with the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Regents – recommends the degree Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa* (“for the sake of the honor”), to be awarded to Mr. Sidney Rittenberg. This degree is often given to someone who has demonstrated dedication to the humanities or human welfare. It is the committee’s view that this degree provides the best fit to specifically recognize Mr. Rittenberg’s life of service and care for people and their communities. The full nomination case statement is available at [plu.edu/provost/documents](http://plu.edu/provost/documents).

**Service to PLU’s Mission**

*“I was deeply persuaded that as long as we could add even one drop to the long river of human progress, that drop would go on and on, regardless of whether we were conscious of it, wave upon wave, till the end of time. In that drop lies our true immortality.”*

- S. Rittenberg, *Manage Your Mind*

Sidney Rittenberg’s commitment to a better, more just world began with his labor-organizing activities in the late 1930s in the American South followed by work with the fledgling post-WWII United Nations’ relief efforts based in Shanghai. He agreed to stay on working for the Communists as a translator and advisor. Twice wrongly jailed by Mao Zedong for being a spy (for a total of 16 years, all in solitary confinement), he retained not only his sanity, but also his abiding love for the Chinese people and his desire to build bridges of understanding between his country of origin and his adopted country. Upon his return to the U.S. in 1980, Mr. Rittenberg taught at The New School in New York; his alma mater, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and for many years as a guest professor in the PLU Chinese Studies program. With his wife, Wang Yulin, he started the international consulting firm Rittenberg Associates which helps American and Chinese companies form relationships and business partnerships with Chinese entities, currently serving as its president.

December 9, 2016 – Attachment D

Mr. Rittenberg’s life and passion for justice and understanding between peoples of different cultures embodies the Lutheran concept of vocation. A major international authority on the Chinese government and its emerging policies, he is in demand as a speaker and consultant both for his encyclopedic and personal knowledge of modern Chinese history and for his many connections with influential people in the current Chinese government and its affiliated organizations.

One of his nomination letters spoke about how he would begin his PLU classes with three questions:

1. How would you go about choosing a new car?
2. What picture do you have in your head of yourself as a happy and successful person twenty years from now?
3. What do happiness and success look like to you?

Students had many practical answers to the first, but very few to the second and third. This opening discussion became the touchstone for the rest of the course on Chinese and Western comparative philosophy.

In 2013, the Washington State China Relations Council established an annual award to honor those who have exemplified the noble purpose of bringing our peoples closer together and named it – appropriately enough – “The Sidney.” Sidney Rittenberg was the first recipient. The citation read in part: “Today as he has for the past nearly 35 years, Sidney Rittenberg continues to live his lifelong dream of becoming a bridge builder between Chinese and Americans.”

## **Biographical Information**

### **Education**

1941 BA Interdisciplinary Studies (Philosophy), University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

### **Academic Positions**

1997-2008 Visiting Professor of Chinese Studies, Pacific Lutheran University

1994-96 Frey Distinguished Professor of Chinese History, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

### **Selected Professional and Career Experience**

1989-present President, Rittenberg Associates

Consulting on business in China; clients have included:

Billy Graham, Craig McCaw, Dan Rather, Mike Wallace, Colgate-Palmolive, Hershey, Computerland, Goldman Sachs, , Hughes Aircraft, Levi-Strauss, Microsoft, Prudential

### **Publications**

2016 *Managing Your Mind*, East-West Insights

1993 *The Man Who Stayed Behind* (with Amanda Bennett), Simon and Schuster

### **Awards**

2003 Bridge-Builder Award, Pacific Lutheran University (first recipient)