

September 2003

THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
IN APPRECIATION  
RICHARD C. ATKINSON

WHEREAS, on October 2, 2003, Richard C. Atkinson will have retired as the seventeenth President of the University of California, the fifth longest serving president in the University's rich history, and a president whose dynamic and courageous leadership has enhanced UC's stature as the world's leading research university of the twenty-first century; and

WHEREAS, in the tradition of Benjamin Franklin and Vannevar Bush, he has contributed brilliantly to the nation and this state as an inventor, public servant, and visionary leader, advancing the frontiers of science through his pathbreaking explorations of human cognition, through his successful efforts to build new bridges between universities and industry, through his vigorous advocacy of academic measures that are equal to the complexity of human talent, and in defining and defending the role of the scientific enterprise in the American Century and beyond; and

WHEREAS, his distinguished contributions as a member of the academy were instrumental in his appointment by President Jimmy Carter as the director of the National Science Foundation, a position he used to breathe new life into the Foundation at a time when it had lost the confidence of Congress, initiating the first US-China student and scholar exchange program, establishing engineering as an area for funding on a par with the sciences, and revitalizing the Foundation's efforts with respect to science education, thus renewing the Foundation as a national treasure for generations of scientists to come; and

WHEREAS, the Regents of the University of California recognized an unparalleled combination of outstanding administrative skills, clear vision, and scientific brilliance when, in 1980, he was selected as the fifth chancellor of UC San Diego, where he set an unparalleled standard of excellence, leading the campus with vigor and determination, recruiting and building a sterling faculty, greatly increasing student enrollment, providing faculty and students with world class facilities, and building innovative university-industry relationships, all of which served to transform the campus from a well-respected center of learning into a world-class institution of higher education; and

WHEREAS, in 1995, he became the seventeenth president of the University of California, and as such, has been a dynamic and imaginative leader, boldly guiding the University to new heights of greatness through his unceasing devotion to

expanding access to the University for an increasingly diverse population, forging historic new admissions policies in order to make the University, as he has said, demonstrably inclusive and fair, enhancing the excellence of its faculty, advancing pioneering research initiatives that were begun under his thoughtful guidance, building enrollment in fields vital to the future of the state, and making the dream of UC Merced a reality; and

WHEREAS, a dominant force nationally and internationally in higher education, his uncommon skill in identifying and solving complex and difficult problems has led to his successful efforts in revolutionizing standardized testing in the United States and beyond, providing a myriad of opportunities for all those who seek to better themselves through education, improving and enhancing classroom and administrative skills for K-12 teachers and administrators, thus making the State of California a place where in the future each child will be afforded a greater opportunity of a sound education;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Regents of the University of California express to Richard C. Atkinson their lasting gratitude and heartfelt appreciation for his extraordinary stewardship of the University, his steadfast adherence to excellence, and his unfailing commitment to the highest ideals of the academic enterprise and to his wife, Rita, for her thoughtful contributions to the life of the University, as well as for the indispensable role she has played as presidential partner and counselor;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Regents extend to Rita and Dick Atkinson their best wishes as they leave the presidency for a life rich in the company of family and good friends and further direct that a suitably inscribed copy of this resolution be presented to them as a token of the Board's high regard and genuine affection for these valued friends, who will be greatly missed and affectionately remembered.