TIPS FOR WRITING CITATIONS

In writing a citation, you need to craft it so it can be read easily out loud at the ceremony; try it out that way. Then, keep in mind that the award will hang on the recipient’s wall; you want the text to fill him or her with pride. Ask yourself: how would the award recipient want to be remembered for his/her accomplishments?

Remember that the Honorary Degree, Outstanding Achievement Award, and Awards of Distinction are not awarded to encourage or reward monetary contributions to the University. This individual is being honored because of achievements in a profession and/or contributions to bettering the community at large.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD (OAA) & AWARD OF DISTINCTION (AOD)

Citation set-up

The OAA & AOD citation preprint space allows approximately 65-77 words. (The layout determines the length, so the editors will work to make your words fit and to achieve an aesthetically pleasing citation layout.)

Content format

The first phrase (one line) is always: “Distinguished graduate of the University of Minnesota” (unless they didn’t get a degree, in which case, use “Distinguished alumnus or alumna of the University of Minnesota.”). This line does not include collegiate designation.

The second phrase (one or two lines) should state current position, affiliation, or title in the recipient’s institution or company, etc. (or most recent, if retired).

The third, fourth, and usually fifth phrases are devoted to accomplishments, contributions to his or her field – academic or business – and impact on the world or the individual’s particular communities.

Phrase format

Each phrase on the citation generally begins with an adjective and noun and then goes on to declare how the individual is outstanding (Examples: Innovative scientist, who…, whose work…; or Visionary executive, who…, whose leadership…; or Dedicated community volunteer, who led… or whose…). The final phrase generally points to the person’s long-lasting impact.

Process

• Read the main nominating statement. It generally sums up what is in the accompanying letters. Pick out pithy quotes that distinguish this recipient as an exemplary individual. (Note especially the adjectives and nouns you will be able to use in the format.)
• Skim the letters of recommendation. Again, pick out pithy quotes and descriptive words and phrases.
• Now, fit these to the format described above. You may need to generalize because there’s not all that much space on the citation. It may feel tricky to reach a healthy balance between selecting specific detailed accomplishments, missing many, and generalizing so much that you could be describing anyone.
But, remember that you or someone from your department will be scripting the ceremony and will be able to add much more detail at that time.

As much as possible, use the words or ideas that the writers of letters of recommendation have used in their statements. Choose the emotional, the superlatives with meat, the hard-hitting words whenever possible. These are especially appropriate in the concluding phase.

**The typical phrase construction will read:**
Dedicated philanthropist, who has generously supported education and …
Entrepreneurial scientist, whose practical approach to science built a whole industry…
Compassionate humanitarian, whose life has been dedicated to the pursuit of justice…
Accomplished scientist, who has earned national distinction as…
National leader in computer education, who has served as a role model…
Tireless advocate of children’s causes, who has had a towering impact on…
Visionary physicist, whose innovative approach to research problems led to…

**Once in awhile, for variety, you may shift to a noun construction.**

Such as:
- Scholar of extraordinary insight, who developed…
- A major force in… - Builder of…
- World leader in… - Pioneer in…

**Or, add a second noun, such as:**
Dedicated volunteer and philanthropist, who has generously given his or her time, expertise, and financial resources to make a difference in the lives of individuals and the quality of life in his community.

**Sample citations for the Outstanding Achievement Award can be found at:**
http://uawards.umn.edu/uawards/citations/sample_oaa.pdf

**Sample citations for the Award of Distinction can be found at:**
http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/alluhonors/sample_aod.pdf

**HONORARY DEGREE**

The Honorary Degree citation is a bit more complicated than an Outstanding Achievement Award and the Award of Distinction citations.

The best way you can help in preparing the nomination materials so that the citation will be easily written for the final format is to be sure that the following is included:

- C.V. or a chronological biography is extremely helpful.
- Letters or nomination summary use colorful descriptions.

University Relations writers will handle these citations, but we have included a description of the format and instruction below, which helps UR writers to ensure uniformity from citation to citation.

**The Honorary Degree citation has a standard format.**

There are two paragraphs.

The first paragraph is straightforward. It always begins with the individual’s origin (native of ______), then lists educational degrees, key career or leadership positions, and sometimes awards. List the positions in chronological order. You may not be able to include everything. List only extremely prestigious awards after positions.
The **second paragraph** is devoted to the individual’s major achievements and accomplishments and the impact of his or her work and life. The language in this paragraph can be flowery and phrases are derived from the accolades found in the nominating letters.

Each clause begins with “because…”

The “because” statements lead up to “the regents of the University of Minnesota confer…”

Include local, national, and global activities. The last sentence either ends with a powerful statement or sums up the recipient’s accomplishments. This is where you should put the most emphasis on his or her greatest global impact.

Approx. number of words: 200

**Sample citations for the Honorary Degree can be found at:**
http://uawards.umn.edu/uawards/citations/sample_hd.pdf