



UNIVERSITY of HAWAII MĀNOA

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII BOARD OF REGENTS

15 APR -8 A9:30

March 27, 2015 (Revised)

MEMORANDUM

TO: Randolph G. Moore Chair, UH Board of Regents

VIA: David Lassner President

David Lassner

VIA: Robert Bley-Vroman Interim Chancellor

R Bley-Vroman

FROM: for Reed Dasenbrock Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Ronald C. Cantor

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

15 MAR 30 P 3:36

RECEIVED

SUBJECT: AWARD OF THE HONORARY DOCTORATE OF HUMANE LETTERS DEGREE FOR U THAN OO AND HENK ROGERS

SPECIFIC ACTION REQUESTED:

It is requested that the Board of Regents award the Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters degree upon U Than Oo and Henk Rogers to recognize their outstanding contributions in their respective fields.

RECOMMENDED EFFECTIVE DATE:

To be effective upon Board approval. UH Mānoa intends to award the Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters during the Mid-Year and Annual Commencement Exercises in the upcoming year.

ADDITIONAL COST:

No additional costs are associated with this request.

PURPOSE:

Pursuant to RP 5.209 III, A.1(a), the Board may confer honorary degrees to individuals in accordance with the criteria and conditions established below:

- a. The candidate must be distinguished with the equivalent of a national or international reputation. Scholarship, the arts, public service, the professions, and business and industry are examples of general areas in which distinguished accomplishments may warrant the award of an honorary degree by the university.

The UH Mānoa Awards Committee is in support of awarding the Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters degree upon U Than Oo and Henk Rogers for their outstanding contributions in their respective fields.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

U Than Oo

U Than Oo's remarkable journey as an education leader in Burma (now officially called Myanmar) is a story of determined triumph. For much of his professional life he worked under challenging circumstances made more difficult as his country was virtually cut off from the outside world for nearly 50 years. Over the course of his professional career and despite a highly political environment, U Than Oo made substantial contributions and saw educational gains by applying the professional training that he had received at the University of Hawai'i's College of Education.

U Than Oo was born in the village of Chaung-nar-dan about 170 miles north of Yangon nearly 88 years ago. His family was poor but he showed promise and an uncle offered to pay for his schooling at a grants-in-aide government school in the town of Pyay, not far from his village. He overcame a number of personal hardships at a young age including a mother who suffered from mental illness and the early, untimely death of his father and older brother. He had just passed his Grade Seven promotion when the invasion of the Japanese in 1942 resulted in the shutdown of all of the schools in the country that lasted for three years. Following the war, U Than Oo again renewed his pursuit of continuing education. With the consent of his family, parcels of their paddy land were sold to finance his schooling at Yangon University.

After receiving his two-year BA in education, U Than Oo worked as a headmaster at a local school. Shortly thereafter, he successfully applied for a scholarship from the newly established East-West Center (EWC) and in 1962 he arrived in Honolulu to attend the University of Hawai'i on an EWC scholarship. He received his Master of Education from UH in 1963.

Upon returning to Myanmar, he began his remarkable career. He was immediately appointed Assistant Administration Officer of Schools in the Directorate of Education, and four months later was appointed Principal of the Patheon Teacher Training School. In 1965 he was named Assistant Education Research Officer at the newly established Burma Education Research Bureau under the Ministry of Education. The Bureau soon became a separate department within the government. While at the Research Bureau, U Than Oo focused on the field of language and the Literacy Movement in Myanmar. His work had a profound effect on how language was taught in Myanmar. Despite challenges, the 1964 to 1988 Mass Literacy Movement achieved a 78.6% literacy rate throughout the country.

While still involved with the Mass Literacy Movement, U Than Oo continued to be promoted, and in 1977 he was named Director General of the Department of Basic Education in the Ministry of Education where he eventually became an influential advisor to the Ministry of Education. In later years, he also served as the head of the Myanmar Academy of Arts and

Henk Rogers

Mr. Rogers is the principal and visionary philanthropist of the Blue Planet Foundation, through which he has demonstrated his commitment to a mission of stewarding the environment through developing non-carbon, clean energy sources. He is personally devoted to helping the planet reduce and eventually eliminate its dependence on fossil fuels. Raised in Holland until age 11, Mr. Rogers attended New York City's specialized school for mathematics, science and technology, Stuyvesant High School. He went on to study computer science at the University of Hawai'i.

Mr. Rogers is a renowned global leader in the gaming industry. One of his software companies holds the exclusive intellectual property rights to Tetris, the world's most popular video game. Rogers revolutionized the industry when he brought the now legendary game to the United States and world markets almost two decades ago. In the 1980s, his ground-breaking work in Japan's fledgling computer game industry led to the development of Japan's first-ever role playing game (RPG), Black Onyx. He is known in Japan as "the father of RPG." Mr. Rogers has also greatly influenced the hand-held game systems market via his facilitation of one of the industry's most fruitful partnerships, between Tetris and Nintendo's Game Boy. Mr. Rogers' achievements in the gaming industry, as well as his accomplishments as an environmental activist make him a leading member of the community, in Hawai'i and abroad.

ACTION RECOMMENDED

It is recommended that the Board of Regents award the Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters degree upon U Than Oo and Henk Rogers to recognize their outstanding contributions in their respective fields.

c: Program Officer Goodwin