



CAMPUS NOTICE

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

January 22, 2018

ALL ACADEMICS, STAFF AND STUDENTS AT UC SAN DIEGO

SUBJECT: Civil Rights Icon John Lewis To Be UC San Diego Commencement Speaker

UC San Diego has announced that Rep. John Lewis, often called “one of the most courageous persons the civil rights movement ever produced,” will offer the keynote address at the invitation-only UC San Diego All Campus Commencement June 16, 2018.

Our campus, recognized as one of the top ten public universities in the U.S., is committed to public service and inclusive excellence—two areas that align with the work of John Lewis. Inspired by the activism surrounding the Montgomery bus boycott and the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., as a young boy he made a decision to become a part of the civil rights movement. A devoted advocate of the philosophy of nonviolence, Lewis has remained at the vanguard of progressive social movements and the human rights struggle in the United States. He has served as U.S. Representative of Georgia’s Fifth Congressional District since 1986.

Rep. John Lewis has dedicated his life to making our world a better place for everyone by protecting human rights and securing civil liberties. He stands up for what he believes in and he is not afraid to take risks. These are ideals we aim to convey to our graduates as they commence their careers and lives beyond the classroom.

Born the son of sharecroppers, Lewis attended segregated public schools in Alabama. At the age of 25, he helped spearhead one of the most seminal moments of the civil rights movement, leading with Hosea Williams—another notable civil rights leader—more than 600 peaceful, orderly protestors across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama. They intended to march from Selma to Montgomery to demonstrate the need for voting rights in the state. The marchers were attacked by Alabama state troopers in a brutal confrontation that became known as Bloody Sunday. News broadcasts and photographs revealing the senseless cruelty of the segregated South helped hasten the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Inspired to continue making change by his experiences, Lewis pursued a career in politics. Currently he serves as senior chief deputy whip for the Democratic Party in the House of Representatives. Lewis is a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, a member of its subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support, and is a ranking member of its subcommittee on Oversight. He holds a B.A. in religion and philosophy from Fisk University, and is a graduate of the American Baptist Theological Seminary, both in Nashville, Tennessee. Lewis is a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian honor.

In his talk at UC San Diego’s commencement, Lewis hopes to inspire the audience as he shares his early civil rights involvement and work in Congress. He often tells students, “When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you must have the courage to stand up, to speak up, and find a way to get in the way.”

The All Campus Commencement kicks off graduation weekend at UC San Diego, where degrees are conferred by academic division upon graduates gathered as one student body. Following the ceremony, the campus's six undergraduate colleges, two professional schools and various graduate programs host personalized graduation events where more than 8,000 undergraduate and graduate students will walk across stage as their names are read. All graduates, families and friends are invited to attend both ceremonies to fully experience the pomp and circumstance, and joy and pride, which mark one of the most memorable times in a student's life.

To learn more, visit the 2018 All Campus Commencement website at <http://commencement.ucsd.edu>.

Pradeep K. Khosla
Chancellor