

## **Chancellor Richard Atkinson to be awarded honorary degree by University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign at its commencement**

**May 22, 1986**

Richard C. Atkinson, chancellor of the University of California, San Diego, will be one of four internationally recognized scholars who will be awarded honorary degrees by the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, at its commencement on May 25.

An honorary Doctor of Science is being conferred on Atkinson in recognition of his pioneering research on mathematical and computer models of human memory and for his seminal role in the development of cognitive science.

"Dr. Atkinson is a very distinguished scientist and has an outstanding record of academic statesmanship through his activities in the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Education, the National Science Foundation (NSF), and many other organizations. Both these factors played a key role in his selection," Richard Merritt, chairman of the Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees at the University of Illinois, said.

Atkinson took office as UCSD's fifth chancellor in March 1980. Prior to coming to San Diego, Atkinson served as the director of the National Science Foundation. He was appointed deputy director in 1975 by President Gerald Ford and director in 1977 by President Jimmy Carter.

As director of NSF, Atkinson had a significant role in shaping national and international policy affecting science and technology. He was a member of the U.S.-People's Republic of China Joint Commission on Science and Technology Cooperation and the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Joint Commission. Among his achievements were the negotiation and signing of the first memorandum of understanding in history between the People's Republic and the United States, a pact that has led to a notable exchange of scientists, scholars, and students.

The chancellor began his academic career at Stanford University in 1956. Except for three years at UCLA and one year at the University of Michigan, he remained at Stanford until 1975, holding faculty appointments at various times in the Department of Psychology, School of Engineering, School of Education, Applied Mathematics and Statistics Laboratories, and Institute for Mathematical Studies in the Social Sciences.

One of the founders of the field of mathematic psychology, Atkinson developed a theory on the nature of human memory which he formulated in mathematical terms. This theory has been the basis for much of the modern research on memory and has played an important role in explaining the effects of drugs on memory and providing techniques for optimizing learning.

He developed one of the first computer-controlled systems for instruction, which served as a prototype for the commercial development of computer-assisted instruction. An important application of his work has been the teaching of reading under computer control to elementary school children.

Atkinson, who has written more than 140 scientific articles and seven books, is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, the National Academy of Education, the Institute of Medicine, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

The honorary degree from the University of Illinois will be Atkinson's tenth.

The other scholars selected this year by the University of Illinois to receive honorary degrees are Dr. Frank H. T. Rhodes, president of Cornell University;

Dr. Stanley Lawrence Elkin, an author and professor of English at Washington University, St. Louis; and Dr. Dong Sheng Yan, vice president of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing.

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