

David Gergen

DOCTOR OF LAWS

As adviser to four United States presidents, as Professor of Public Service and Director of the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, as national commentator and news editor, teacher, Navy veteran, and best-selling author, David Gergen has been an active participant in American national life at the highest levels and a model of excellence in political leadership for more than forty years.

Mr. Gergen speaks with authority when he advises on leadership, having served with distinction in the White House over a span of thirty years. In the Nixon and Ford administrations, Mr. Gergen transformed public communications in the Office of the President. His historic "100 days" memorandum in 1980 shaped the communications emphasis of the Reagan administration, creating approaches to presidential communication that have become the model for the Executive Branch. He put his country before party when he joined Bill Clinton's Democratic administration as an advisor on domestic affairs and foreign policy.

As its editor for nearly a decade, Mr. Gergen drove *U.S. News & World Report* to record gains in circulation and advertising. He became a familiar face to a national audience with weekly political commentary on the MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour. Today he is editor-at-large for *U.S. News & World Report*, a senior political analyst for CNN, and a frequent lecturer at venues around the world.

In a career defined more by principle than by ideology, Mr. Gergen has called for unlikely alliances to address the nation's most urgent issues. Amidst today's economic crisis, he has challenged corporate leaders and regulators to develop a higher standard of professional conduct in corporate management. He argues collaboration among scientists, advocacy groups, and business leaders to address environmental challenges. In Washington, he has transcended partisanship, earning the respect of Republicans and Democrats alike.

One of the country's preeminent political commentators, he favors the broad perspective and informed debate—offering seasoned policy analysis that rejects polemics and cynicism. At a time when the strident tenor of American politics seems to threaten the capacity of government to address even the most urgent of national priorities, Mr. Gergen's moderating views and sonorous voice have become indispensable parts of the nation's public conversation. He has an unwavering faith in the capacity of each new generation to forge an American identity of the highest caliber.

Closer to home, this great North Carolinian has made important contributions to Elon University's rapid rise in quality and growth in reputation. David Gergen's contributions to our intellectual life include service as the Isabella Cannon Distinguished Visiting Professor of Leadership as well as some notable "firsts": inaugural lecturer for the Joseph M. Bryan Distinguished Leadership Lecture Series, inaugural member of the School of Law Founders' Society, first chair of the Law School Advisory Board, and the first speaker to address our law school graduates at Commencement. A lawyer who was a founding proponent for Elon University School of Law, he vigorously champions the ideal that legal education should prepare students to be not only excellent lawyers but also leaders in their communities.

IN RECOGNITION of his remarkable and lasting contributions to the governance of the United States and to the civic health of the nation, Elon University is pleased to bestow upon David Gergen the honorary degree Doctor of Laws this twenty-fourth day of May 2009.

Leo M. Lambert
President