November 19-20, 2026

ITEM 227-2003-R1126

Request for Authorization to Award an Honorary Doctorate to Mike Reynolds; Montana State University

THAT

In recognition of many career achievements and the distinction brought to the Montana University System, the Board of Regents grants Montana State University the authority to confer an Honorary Doctor of Arts to Mike Reynolds.

EXPLANATION

A native of Bozeman, Mike's connection to Montana State University runs deep. He is the son of Creech Reynolds, a longtime MSU music professor and the namesake of Reynolds Recital Hall. As a gifted young musician, Mike earned admission to the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music and became the founding cellist of the internationally acclaimed Muir String Quartet. Over a distinguished career spanning four decades, he has performed more than 2,000 concerts worldwide, appearing at venues such as the White House, Carnegie Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, and the Sydney Opera House. His recordings have earned some of the highest honors in classical music, including a Grammy Award, Grammy nomination, Grand Prix du Disque awards, and numerous international recognitions. He also previously received an honorary doctorate from Rhode Island College.

Despite achieving international acclaim, Mike has remained deeply committed to Montana and Montana State University. In 1989, he founded the Montana Chamber Music Festival and later helped establish the Montana Chamber Music Society, bringing world-class musicians and performances to communities across the state. Just as importantly, he has consistently worked with MSU students, providing masterclasses, mentorship, and opportunities to engage directly with some of the world's finest musicians.

Throughout his career, Mike has represented the very best of Montana. He has excelled on the international stage while never losing sight of the values and community that shaped him. Whether serving as a professor and Director of the School of Music at Boston University, inspiring generations of students, supporting youth music education nationwide, or returning repeatedly to Montana to enrich the cultural and educational life of our state, he has demonstrated a sustained commitment to service, excellence, and leadership.

Mike's most far-reaching contribution may be through the organization he co-founded, the Classics for Kids Foundation. The foundation provides matching grants for quality string instruments to schools serving young people, particularly in rural and underserved communities. Since its founding, the organization has supported more than 500 music programs in all 50 states and helped place thousands of instruments into the hands of students who otherwise may never have had the opportunity to study music. Supporters ranging from former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to leaders in higher education and philanthropy have highlighted Mike's vision, leadership, and dedication to expanding educational opportunities through music.

Mike’s extraordinary artistic accomplishments, dedication to education, commitment to expanding opportunities for young people, and enduring service to Montana make him an exceptionally deserving candidate for this honor.

For these and other extraordinary contributions, the Board of Regents is pleased to confer an Honorary Doctor of Arts at Montana State University upon Mike Reynolds.

ATTACHMENT: Attachment #1: Letter of Nomination from President Tessman