

# RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS**, the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education recognizes Henry M. Thomas III at the conclusion of more than a decade of his service as a member of the Board and its Academic Affairs Committee; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Thomas, a native of Springfield, Massachusetts, was appointed to the Board as the representative of the University of Massachusetts Board of Trustees, where he has served as a member since 2007 and also served as chair from 2012 to 2015; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Thomas has spent his entire career in the Urban League movement and was appointed at age twenty-six as President and CEO of the Urban League of Springfield, making him the youngest leader of any Urban League affiliate in the United States and beginning a thirty-nine year tenure in the position which he still holds today; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Thomas has been a vocal advocate for the expansion of opportunity for underserved populations, as evidenced in his contributions to Board policy and his other volunteer work, including his role as Chief Executive Officer for the historic Camp Atwater, the oldest African American overnight youth development camp in the United States, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Thomas has served as chairman or distinguished member on many other local, state and national boards, including the National Association of Urban League Executives, Springfield Fire and Police Commissions, Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate, Hamden County Regional Employment Board, New Leadership Charter School, and Step Up Springfield; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Thomas possesses a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, a Masters of Arts in Human Resource Development from American International College, a Jurisprudence Doctorate from Western New England University School of Law, and honorary doctoral degrees from Bay Path University and Westfield State University; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Thomas takes great pride in his loving and accomplished family, including his wife Devonia, who recently retired as a Vice Principal in Springfield Public Schools; his son Perren, who is a Wall Street Investment banker; his daughter, Shadae Harris, who serves as Assistant Superintendent of the Richmond School District in Virginia; and his grandsons, Perren and Penn; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Thomas has been a tireless advocate for public higher education and for opportunity for all Massachusetts residents;

## NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT

*On behalf of the members of the Board of Higher Education, the Department staff, and the students and institutions of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education honors and commends Henry Thomas III at the completion of his tenure on the Board.*

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Chris Gabrieli, Chairman  
Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

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Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner  
Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

June 19, 2018