RESOLVED, that Medgar Evars College award the degree of Doctor of Science to John Ruffin and the degree of Doctor of Fine Arts to Wynton Marsalis, honoris causa, at the College’s annual Convocation, in September of 2012.

EXPLANATION: Dr. John Ruffin is the Director of the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities and oversees its annual budget of $276 million. In addition, he provides leadership in minority health disparities research for the National Institute of Health. As an academician and a scientist, he has devoted his professional career to improving the health status of racial and ethnic minorities and other underserved populations. He has led the transformation of the NIH minority health and health disparities research agenda from a programmatic concept to an institutional reality with the transition of the administratively-established National Institute of Health, Office of Minority Programs to the legislative creation of the Office of Research on Minority Health, the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities, and now the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities.

By the age of 19, Wynton Marsalis had signed a recording contract with CBS Records. Between 1982 and 1999, he produced close to 40 jazz and classical recordings for Columbia Jazz and Sony Classical, and he has won a total of eight Grammy Awards. In 1987 Mr. Marsalis co-founded Jazz at Lincoln Center which hosts jazz performances and educational programs. Since 1992, Mr. Marsalis has served as the organization’s artistic director and as the leader of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. He has written numerous concert works for the orchestra and in 2004 presided over the opening of Jazz at Lincoln Center’s new home – the Frederick P. Rose Hall, the world’s first performing arts facility designed specifically for jazz education, performance and broadcast.
**Dr. John Ruffin** is the Director of the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD). He oversees the NIMHD budget of approximately $276 million. In addition, he provides leadership for the minority health and health disparities research activities of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) which constitutes an annual budget of approximately $2.8 billion.

He is a well-respected leader and visionary in the field of minority health and health disparities. As an academician and a scientist, he has devoted his professional career to improving the health status of racial and ethnic minorities and other underserved populations. He has an impressive track record of developing and supporting programs to increase the cadre of minority scientists, physicians, and other health professionals, as well as attract a diverse group of researchers to the health disparities field. His success has been due in large part to his ability to motivate others, and his expertise in strategic planning, administration, and the development of numerous collaborative partnerships. He has led the transformation of the NIH minority health and health disparities research agenda from a programmatic concept to an institutional reality with the transition of the administratively-established NIH Office of Minority Programs to the legislative creation of the Office of Research on Minority Health, the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities, and now the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities.

As the NIH federal official for minority health disparities research, Dr. Ruffin has planned and brought to fruition the largest biomedical research program in the nation aimed at efforts to eliminate health disparities. The hallmark of his approach is to foster and expand strategic partnerships in throughout the federal government, state agencies, community organizations, academic institutions, the private sector, as well as international governments and non-governmental organizations. Under his leadership, the NIH convened the first “Science of Eliminating Health Disparities Summit” in December 2008 to showcase the work, progress, and challenges of the NIH and its many federal and non-federal government partners involved in minority health and health disparities research.

Dr. Ruffin has a stellar record of professional achievement including an honorary doctor of science degree from Spelman College, Tuskegee University, University of Massachusetts in Boston, North Carolina State University, Morehouse School of Medicine, Meharry Medical College, Tulane University and Dillard University. He has been recognized by various professional, non-profit, and advocacy organizations. He has also received the Martin Luther King Jr., Legacy Award for National Service, the Department of Health and Human Services’ Special Recognition Award; and the U.S. Presidential Merit Award. Dr. Ruffin received a B.S. in Biology from Dillard University, a M.S. in Biology from Atlanta University, a Ph.D. in Systematic and Developmental Biology from Kansas State University, and completed post-doctoral studies in biology at Harvard University.
Wynton Marsalis was born in New Orleans, where his father, Ellis Marsalis, is a well-respected jazz pianist and teacher. By age 19, Marsalis had signed a recording contract with CBS Records. He made his recording debut as a leader in 1982, and over the next 17 years produced close to 40 jazz and classical records for Columbia Jazz and Sony Classical.

In 1983 he became the first and only artist to win both classical and jazz Grammy Awards in the same year, a feat he immediately repeated. To date he has won six Grammy Awards for his jazz recordings and two for recordings of classical music. His recordings include Black Codes (From the Underground), the series Standard Time which includes the albums The Resolution of Romance and Intimacy Calling, both of which feature his father on piano, and an epic meditation on the blues entitled Soul Gestures in Southern Blue. The three volumes of Soul Gestures are: Thick in the South, Uptown Ruler, and Levee Low Moan. Marsalis’ Sony Classical recordings include concert, chamber and solo music for trumpet from the Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and 20th century repertoires.

In 1987 Wynton Marsalis co-founded Jazz at Lincoln Center to sponsor jazz performance and educational programs at New York’s premier performing arts center. Since 1992, Marsalis has served as the organization’s Artistic Director and as leader of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. Marsalis has written numerous concert works for the orchestra, beginning in 1992 with In This House, On This Morning, an extended piece based on the form of a traditional gospel service.

In 1994, he published his first book, Sweet Swing Blues on the Road. In 1997, Wynton Marsalis received the Pulitzer Prize for Music for his oratorio Blood in the Fields. Marsalis was the first jazz musician ever to be so honored. The year 2000 saw the release of the eight-volume CD series, Swinging into the 21st. In 2004, Marsalis presided over the long-awaited opening of Jazz at Lincoln Center’s new home: Frederick P. Rose Hall, the world’s first performing arts facility designed specifically for jazz education, performance and broadcast.