

I.B.3 –CITY COLLEGE - HONORARY DEGREES TO BE AWARDED AT THE COLLEGE’S ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY ON MAY 31, 2013

RESOLVED, that the City College of New York award Martin Cohen the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*, and Mr. Mo Yan the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, at the College’s annual commencement ceremony on May 31, 2013.

EXPLANATION: One of City College’s most dedicated volunteer leaders, Mr. Martin Cohen is a 1970 alumnus of City College’s Division of Science and is the Co-Chairman and Co-CEO of Cohen & Steers, Inc., a New York-based investment company. He serves as Chair of The City College 21st Century Foundation, the College’s principal fundraising arm.

Mr. Mo Yan is a literary giant in the Chinese-speaking world and the 2012 Nobel Laureate in Literature. No contemporary writer has contributed more to the imagination and evaluation of Chinese history and society than he has.

Martin Cohen

One of CCNY's most dedicated volunteer leaders, Martin Cohen is also a leader in money management and an authority in real estate securities investments. He is co-chairman and co-CEO of Cohen & Steers, Inc., an investment firm he founded with Robert Steers in 1986. The company, listed on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) and headquartered in New York City, is considered a pioneer in real estate securities investment and is a leading global investment manager with offices in Seattle, London, Brussels and Hong Kong.

Marty was raised in Brooklyn, NY, and graduated from The City College of New York with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1970. He worked as a biochemist before attending New York University where he earned an MBA degree. While a vice president at Citibank he organized and managed the Citibank Real Estate Stock Fund. Subsequently, as a senior vice president and portfolio manager at National Securities and Research Corporation, he and Mr. Steers managed the nation's first real estate securities mutual fund.

Marty has been honored by his industry with a number of awards. He has served as a member of the Board of Governors of the National Association of Real Estate Investment Trusts (NAREIT). In 2001 he was the recipient of the NAREIT Industry Achievement Award, and in 2008 New York University presented him with its Award for Innovation and Excellence in the REIT Industry.

Marty has been a member of the 21st Century Foundation board since 2006 when he also became chair of the Investment Committee, an office he still holds. In 2006 he was the recipient of CCNY's Alumni Association's highest honor, the Townsend Harris Medal, and in 2007 he was invited to join the inaugural group of the President's Circle. He was also honored with Frank Sciame at the Presidential Awards Dinner in May 2009. Later that year he honored the College by serving on the Presidential Search Committee. In 2010 Marty was elected Chairman of the 21st Century Foundation by unanimous action of the board membership, a role he continues to develop.

In addition to his volunteer work with City College, Marty is involved with many other charitable organizations. He is on the board of trustees of Temple Israel of the City of New York, the Hebrew Union College- Jewish Institute of Religion, and Guild Hall, a cultural organization promoting the arts in East Hampton, NY. He and his wife Michele also assist in the advancement of other institutions such as Riverdale Country School, Alfred University and New York's Museum of Arts and Design.

He and his wife Michele are among the most generous and dedicated donors to City College. Most recently, Marty and Michele made a transformative pledge to the Division of Science to provide CCNY with its first endowed deanship and several endowed professorships.

Martin Cohen is truly deserving of this honor for his exemplary service to The City College of New York.

Mo Yan

Mo Yan is a literary giant in the Chinese-speaking world. No contemporary writer has contributed more to the imagination and evaluation of Chinese history and society than he has. By probing China's official and popular myths, Mo Yan has created a distinctive literary expression that is embraced by readers and acclaimed by critics internationally.

Mo Yan (pen name of Guan Moye) was born in 1955 in a peasant family in north-eastern China. Growing up during the disastrous Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), he received little schooling and was sent into the fields to tend livestock and later into a factory. In 1976 he joined the People's Liberation Army and during this time began to study literature and write.

"Mo yan" means "do not speak" – a warning from his parents during the turmoil brought by the Cultural Revolution, but Mo Yan is certainly one of the most prolific writers in the contemporary Chinese literary landscape. Since the publication of his first short story in 1981, he has produced forty novels and novellas, more than eighty short stories, three collections of essays, and about a dozen dramatic scripts.

Mo Yan is keen on modern Chinese history and contemporary social issues. He styles the majority of his works as historical fictions. Yet "facts" are of little interest to him. Like the Latin American creators of magic realism, he routinely blends folk beliefs, bizarre imagery, and a variety of narrative techniques to create uniquely satisfying literature that easily cross national and cultural borders. His earliest success, *Red Sorghum*, consists of five stories that unfold and interweave in quasi-fictional township of Gaomi in several turbulent decades in the 20th-century China, with depictions of bandit culture, the Japanese occupation and the harsh conditions endured by poor farm workers. *Red Sorghum* was filmed in 1987, directed by Zhang Yimou, and was the first Chinese film to reap critical and box-office rewards in the West. His next novels, *The Garlic Ballads* and *The Republic of Wine*, are satires and parody of official discourse and both have been judged subversive because of their sharp criticism of contemporary Chinese society. *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* addresses the bloody history of 20th-century China through the microcosm of a single family. The novel *Life and Death are Wearing Me Out* uses black humor to describe everyday life in the young People's Republic, while *Sandalwood Death* is a story of human cruelty in the crumbling Empire. Mo Yan's latest novel *Frog* illuminates the consequences of China's single-child policy.

Mo Yan was awarded a master's degree in literature from Beijing Normal University in 1991 and honorary doctorate from The Open University of Hong Kong in 2005.

He has received numerous literary prizes worldwide, including Fukuoka Asian Culture Prize (Japan 2006), Newman Prize for Chinese Literature (United States 2009), Honglou meng Literature Prize (Hong Kong 2008) and Mao Dun Literature Prize (China 2011). In 2012 the Nobel Prize in Literature was awarded to Mo Yan, "who with hallucinatory realism merges folk tales, history and the contemporary," as stated in the award's citation. "Through a mixture of fantasy and reality, historical and social perspectives, Mo Yan has created a world reminiscent in its complexity of those in the writings of William Faulkner and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, at the same time finding a departure point in old Chinese literature and in oral tradition." He has been referred to by Donald Morrison of *Time Magazine* as "one of the most famous, oft-banned and widely pirated of all Chinese writers." Mo Yan is the first Chinese citizen ever to earn this prestigious honor.

Mo Yan's works have been translated into English, Spanish, French, German, Swedish, Russian, Japanese, among others.