RESOLVED, that Hunter College awards Twyla Tharp the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters at the college’s winter commencement ceremony on January 22, 2015.

EXPLANATION, Twyla Tharp is an acclaimed and world renowned choreographer. Tharp has created more than 160 works: 135 dances; choreographed five movies; choreographed works for television and written two best-selling books. She has won a Tony Award; two Emmy awards; received 19 honorary doctorates; the Vietnam Veterans of America President's Award; received a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur fellowship; the 2004 National Medal of the Arts; the 2008 Jerome Robbins Award and a 2008 Kennedy Center Honor. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and an Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.
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Tharp began her formal dance training in California. She attended the Vera Lynn School of Dance, Pacific High School in San Bernardino, and later Pomona College. She transferred to Barnard College in New York, where she studied with Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham. After graduating with a degree in art history in 1963, Tharp joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company. Only two years later, in 1965, she founded her dance company, Twyla Tharp Dance. During this time, she often collaborated with her then husband, artist and Hunter College professor, Robert Huot, using studio space at the College. Her first ballet TANK DIVE premiered at the College that year on 16th floor of Hunter North on April 26, 1965. In 1999, Tharp returned to Hunter College as a Distinguished Visiting Professor and set a revival of her 1970 work, THE ONE HUNDREDS, that was performed as a part of a benefit for the Dance Program at Hunter College. Tharp’s relationship has continued with Hunter College’s Dance Department over the years. In 2007, student dancers participated in a College Showcase of Tharp’s work where they performed COUNTRY DANCES. Hunter College was one of five New York based schools to participate which included Julliard, Barnard College, Manhattanville College and Sarah Lawrence College.

Tharp’s work first appeared on Broadway in 1980 with WHEN WE WERE VERY YOUNG, followed by her collaboration with musician David Byrne on THE CATHERINE WHEEL and later by SINGIN’ IN THE RAIN. In 2002, Tharp’s dance musical MOVIN’ OUT, premiered set to the music and lyrics of Billy Joel. MOVIN’ OUT earned Tharp the 2003 Tony Award, as well as the 2003 Astaire Award, the Drama League Award for Sustained Achievement in Musical Theater and the Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Choreography, with UK's Critic's Circle National Dance Award. Tharp later worked with Bob Dylan’s music and lyrics in THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’ and COME FLY AWAY, set to songs sung by Frank Sinatra.

In film, Tharp has collaborated with director Milos Forman on HAIR, RAGTIME and AMADEUS. She has also worked with Taylor Hackford on WHITE NIGHTS and James Brooks on I’LL DO ANYTHING.

Her television credits include choreographing SUE’S LEG for the inaugural episode of PBS' DANCE IN AMERICA IN 1976, co-producing and directing MAKING TELEVISION DANCE, and directing THE CATHERINE WHEEL for BBC Television. Tharp co-directed the television special BARYSHNIKOV BY THARP, which won two Emmy Awards as well as a Director’s Guild of American Award for Outstanding Director Achievement.

In 1992, Ms. Tharp published her autobiography PUSH COMES TO SHOVE. She went on to write THE CREATIVE HABIT: Learn it and Use it for Life, followed by THE COLLABORATIVE HABIT: Life Lessons for Working Together.