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UNI's first honorary doctorate to Hearst

DES MOINES — Cedar Falls farmer, poet, literateur and educator James Hearst was chosen by the State Board of Regents Friday to become the first recipient of the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature at the University of Northern Iowa.

UNI Pres. John Kamerick called the regents' selection of Hearst "most appropriate."

"The UNI committee charged with this responsibility and the Faculty Senate have shown an admirable and perceptive sensitivity to those values and purposes which honorary degrees were established to enhance. Mr. Hearst has brought more honor and prestige to the university than the university can ever bestow upon him. Ad multos annos gloriosque annos vivat (May he live for many more glorious years)."

HEARST, WHO will be 75 this year, was born in rural Cedar Falls. He has served UNI continuously since 1941 and will retire this summer.

He studied at UNI, the University of Iowa and the University of Guanajuato in Mexico. Following service in the U.S. Army from 1917-1918, he was a reader for "The Midland," a literary magazine published in Iowa City. He was also farm editor of the "Mid-West News" in Cedar Falls.

He has also published numerous farm articles and book reviews in such publications as "Commonweal," "The Nation," "Des Moines Register" and "Chicago Sun Times."


Poetry and an essay by him are included in "Voyages to the Inland Sea," published by the University of Wisconsin in 1972.

In 1963 he was named the "Best Iowa Poet of the Year" by the Midland Booksellers Association, and has appeared frequently on television and as a lecturer for social and professional groups.

FOR SIX summers, from 1966-71, he was director of the poetry workshop of the Aspen School of Contemporary Art in Colorado. In the spring of 1968 he spent a week in Northwest Iowa talking at high schools about literature at the request of the Iowa Arts Council.

He is a member of the American Association of University Professors, American Civil Liberties Union, United World Federalists, Farm Bureau and the Rotary Club.

Hearst formerly owned and managed a 200-acre farm west of Cedar Falls and now lives in the city.

Hearst will receive the honorary degree at the UNI Spring Commencement Saturday, May 17.