

**BOARD OF REGENTS
BRIEFING PAPER**

1. AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Nevada State University Honorary Degree Recipient, 2025 Commencement

MEETING DATE: March 6-7, 2025 _____

2. BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

Nomination of an individual to receive an honorary degree at 2025 commencement ceremony.

3. SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

Nevada State University President DeRionne Pollard requests approval to present Marydean Martin with an honorary degree at NSU's 2025 commencement ceremony.

4. IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):

Standing item

5. CHECK THE NSHE STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL THAT IS SUPPORTED BY THIS REQUEST:

- Access (Increase participation in post-secondary education)
- Success (Increase student success)
- Close the Achievement Gap (Close the achievement gap among underserved student populations)
- Workforce (Collaboratively address the challenges of the workforce and industry education needs of Nevada)
- Research (Co-develop solutions to the critical issues facing 21st century Nevada and raise the overall research profile)
- Not Applicable to NSHE Strategic Plan Goals

INDICATE HOW THE PROPOSAL SUPPORTS THE SPECIFIC STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

Marydean Martin is a visionary advocate for literacy, higher education, and the arts whose lifelong commitment to advancing literary engagement has transformed Nevada State University and beyond. From her early career as a librarian to her success in marketing and public relations, Martin has remained dedicated to promoting access to literature and learning. Her transformational gift led to the naming of the Marydean Martin Library at Nevada State University, recognized nationally for excellence in academic libraries. She further extended her impact through the Marydean Martin Writers' Project, providing literary readings and workshops to both students and the broader community. As a founding supporter of Nevada State University and a Lifetime Giving Society member, Martin has directly contributed to student success, scholarship opportunities, and literacy-based initiatives. Her passion for reading continues to inspire generations, ensuring that books and knowledge remain accessible to all.

6. BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

Key Achievements of Marydean Martin

Leadership in Literacy & Higher Education Support

- Lifelong advocate for literacy and literature, beginning as an assistant librarian at Las Vegas High School and later as a reference librarian at the University of Nevada, Reno.
- Served on the Friends of the Library Board at UNLV, later evolving into the Libraries Advisory Board.
- Founding supporter of Nevada State University and an inaugural member of the Gibson Society (Lifetime Giving Society).
- Established scholarships supporting teacher education and creative writing students.

Transformational Impact on Nevada State University

- Provided a transformational gift leading to the creation of the Marydean Martin Library at Nevada State University.
 - The library was recognized as one of the best college libraries in the nation, receiving the 2020 Excellence in Academic Libraries Award from the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL).
- Founded the Marydean Martin Writers' Project through Nevada State University's Office for the Arts, offering literary readings and workshops open to the community.
- Continues to serve as a founding member of the Friends of the Library at Nevada State University.

Enduring Commitment to Reading & Literary Engagement

- Actively promotes reading and literature by distributing custom bookmarks with literary quotes to encourage reading.
- Frequently shares books and literary materials with colleagues, friends, and students, ensuring that literature remains an integral part of academic and personal enrichment.
- Her legacy gifts—the Marydean Martin Library and Writers' Project—have placed countless books into the hands of Nevada State University students, shaping a culture of literary appreciation for future generations.

7. POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

None

8. ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:

None

9. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE:

The Chancellor's Office recommends approval.

10. COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:

- Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title # _____ Chapter # _____ Section # _____
- Amends Current Board Policy: Title # _____ Chapter # _____ Section # _____
- Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter # _____ Section # _____
- Other: _____
- Fiscal Impact: Yes _____ No _____
Explain: _____



Honorary Degree Nomination Form

1. Degree to be Awarded:

Honorary Masters Honorary Baccalaureate Honorary Associate

2. Please state the name and address of your nominee for an Honorary Degree.

Marydean Martin

██

3. Honorary degrees shall be awarded to persons who have made significant contributions to the improvement of the quality of academic programs and academic life at one of the NSHE's institutions. Persons currently holding public elected office are not eligible for the degree except in extraordinary circumstances.

What are your reasons for nominating this person? (Attach additional pages, if necessary.)

Marydean Martin is a transformative leader in literacy, higher education, and literary engagement whose impact on Nevada State University has been profound. Through her visionary philanthropy, Martin established the Marydean Martin Library, which has become a nationally recognized academic institution, receiving the 2020 Excellence in Academic Libraries Award—the highest honor in the field. Her dedication to expanding literary opportunities led to the creation of the Marydean Martin Writers' Project, ensuring that students and the community have access to literary readings and workshops that foster creative expression.

Beyond her philanthropic contributions, Martin has championed education and literacy-based resources, supporting students through scholarships, mentorship, and direct engagement with literature. Her unwavering passion for reading and her commitment to sharing books and literary materials with others has created a lasting impact on the academic and cultural life of Nevada State University. By awarding Marydean Martin an honorary degree, Nevada State University acknowledges her extraordinary contributions to education, literacy, and community engagement, reinforcing the university's mission to cultivate knowledge and lifelong learning.

Debbie P. Pollard

2.03.2025

President

Date

Nevada State University



Marydean Martin

Personal

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Employment

- Industry: Marketing/PR
- Current: Retired; Philanthropist, Poet/Writer
- Former: Marydean & Associates
- Former: Librarian, UNLV Libraries
- Notes: Managed high profile NV political campaigns

Education

- American University, UNLV
- Notes: While in school she worked as a Librarian in the University Library

Philanthropy

- NS Foundation involvement: Founder and early Trustee of Foundation; has also served on President's Advisory Council for Fred Maryanski and Bart Patterson.
- NS Foundation Leadership Giving: Lead gift for library at NS; first in DAW and now in RSC
- Overall giving to NS Foundation: \$715K+ given; 21 consecutive years of giving; in addition to establishing the Marydean Martin Library, Marydean has donated laptops for students, and has created 5 scholarships and the Marydean Martin Writers' Project; she has included NSU in her estate plan; and she donated a Roy Purcell painting to the NS Permanent Collection.
- Other philanthropic interests/giving: Vegas PBS, UNLV Libraries, Impact Las Vegas, Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health, the Public Education Foundation, Smith Center for the Performing Arts

Miscellaneous

- Publication: Who Will Love the Earth, 42-page book of poetry, published 1982 by Scorpion Press

- November 2001 quote after visiting other higher ed institutions during the founding of NS: “The interest and positive response we received from administration, staff and students was impressive at each college. They readily shared their successes as well as their mistakes. Most of them expressed how fortunate Nevadans are to have the chance to start a new State College literally from the ground up in this exciting technological age. They were especially intrigued, and encouraged our plan to combine the cutting edge of technology and building space design with a traditional liberal arts education that stresses the importance of teaching every student the use of language through the basic art of writing.”
- From 2022 letter of support from Nathaniel King for UNLV Outstanding Alumni Award Nomination: As a founding donor for more than 20 years, Marydean’s gifts to the library supported the initial collection and established the Marydean Martin Library in the Dawson building. In 2015, the Marydean Martin Library moved to the Rogers Student Center and became the state’s first digital library. The Library is a vital hub of student learning and engagement. In Marydean’s own words, “Literacy is the most important thing to me.” Beyond her foundational support for the Library, Marydean also provides invaluable support for the College’s diverse student population by funding laptops for students and providing annual scholarships in Special Education, Education, and Creative Writing.

Tribute being drafted by Angela Brommel at NSU:

Marydean Martin’s literary advancement efforts began when she worked as an assistant librarian for Las Vegas High School while attending Nevada Southern (UNLV), where she later worked. After transferring to the University of Nevada in Reno, she worked as a reference librarian. As her career shifted, and she became a successful owner of a marketing and public relations business in southern Nevada, she served on the Friends of the Library Board at UNLV, which would later become the Libraries Advisory Board.

Through a transformational gift, the Marydean Martin Library at Nevada State University is named in her honor, and she remains as a founding member of its Friends of the Library. In 2020, the Marydean Martin Library was recognized as one of the best college libraries in the nation as a recipient of the 2020 Excellence in Academic Libraries Award from the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL). This award is the highest possible honor from the academic library professional community. That same year, Marydean envisioned a new literary program, the Marydean Martin Writers' Project through Nevada State University's Office for the Arts. The program offers literary readings and workshops, to the campus that will be open to the community.

As a founding supporter of Nevada State College and an inaugural member of Nevada State's Lifetime Giving Society, the Gibson Society, Marydean has supported the pursuit of higher education, literacy-based programming and resources, as well as scholarships for students pursuing teacher education and creative writing.

Reading and literature are so important to Marydean, that in an effort to encourage reading, she creates bookmarks featuring literary quotes and gives them out to everyone she meets. Meeting with Marydean inevitably involves a new stack of books, newspaper clippings about poet laureates - and a new bookmark. You might even find a book in your mailbox.

Marydean's legacy gifts Marydean Martin Library and the Marydean Martin Writers' Project, has enthusiastically put countless books into the hands of generations of Nevada State University students.