

2004

## May Commencement

John Owens

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Commencement  
May 8, 2004

**VICE CHANCELLOR JOHN OWENS:**

Few Nebraskans are as devoted to the University of Nebraska as Mark Gustafson. Driven by his belief that a strong university is key to a strong Nebraska economy, Mark is an advocate for the university in the local, state, and national arenas. He is a Nebraska delegate to the Council for Agricultural, Research, Extension, and Teaching, a national advocacy organization for higher education. Since 1991, he's been a member of Agriculture Builders of Nebraska, Inc., which supports UNL's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, as well as the entire University, and has served three terms as president. He has served on the advisory councils for the UNL chancellor and the NU president and served on UNL's Future Nebraska Taskforce. He holds baccalaureate and master's degrees from UNL and a Ph.D. from the University of California-Berkeley. When he's not volunteering his time, Mark operates the family farm near Mead. He and his wife Dianne are the parents of two children, Christopher, a UNL alumnus, and Anneke, a UNL junior.

*[Chancellor Perlman and Dr. Owens present the award to*

*Dr. Gustafson Regent Schroeder reads the Citation.]*

## DR. JOHN OWENS

Chancellor Perlman, I have a candidate for the honorary degree, Doctor of Science, Dr. Maxine Singer. Dr. Singer is an internationally recognized biochemist known for her groundbreaking work in DNA and its complementary molecule RNA. She was a pioneer in the elucidation of the genetic code. Additionally, she has been a key leader in influencing the nation's science policy and in the ethical, moral, and social implications of recombinant DNA research. A member of the National Academy of Sciences, she is president emerita of the Carnegie Institution of Washington and scientist emerita in the National Cancer Institute and received the National Medal of Science. She holds degrees from Swarthmore College and Yale University. Her concerns about the lack of scientific and mathematical literacy led her to initiate the Carnegie Academy for Science Education. She has collaborated with Paul Berg on a number of projects including three books, the latest of which, "*An Uncommon Farmer: George W. Beadle and the Emergence of Genetics in the 20th Century,*" is a biography of University of Nebraska alumnus and Nobel Prize winner George Beadle.

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**DR. JOHN OWENS:**

Chancellor Perlman, I have a candidate for the honorary degree, Doctor of Science. Dr. Paul Berg. Paul Berg has distinguished himself as a biochemist and molecular biologist, as well as an author and influential thinker on the public policy issues of genetic engineering. He is the Cahill professor emeritus of biochemistry and director emeritus of the Beckman Center for Molecular and Genetic Medicine at Stanford University.

Among his many honors is the 1980 Nobel Prize in chemistry, the Eli Lilly Basic Science Research Award, the Lasker Prize, and the National Medal of Science. Dr. Berg's research led to the co-discovery of transfer-RNA and tRNA enzymes that catalyze reactions. He has long devoted his time to encouraging students to enter science as a profession. With Maxine Singer, he has co-authored the textbook *Genes and Genome*; a lay-person text, *Dealing with Genes*; and most recently, a biography, *An Uncommon Farmer: George W. Beadle and the Emergence of Genetics in the 20th Century*. Dr. Berg heard George Beadle speak at symposia and seminars in the 1950s, and in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the two were members of the Welch

Scientific Foundation Advisory Board, of which Dr. Beadle was a founding member.

Dr. Berg's association with George Beadle no doubt allowed deeper insight as he and Dr. Singer were researching and writing their biography of him. Chancellor Perlman, it is my honor to present Dr. Paul Berg.