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# *The University of Dayton*

# *News Release*

WENDELKEN-WILSON, BOMBECK RECEIVE  
UD HONORARY DEGREES

DAYTON, Ohio, April 7, 1981 -- Erma Fiste Bombeck and Charles Wendelken-Wilson will receive honorary degrees from the University of Dayton at commencement exercises on April 26.

Wendelken-Wilson has been music director and conductor of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra since 1975. A native of New Jersey and a 1960 graduate of the Mannes College of Music in New York City, he began his conducting career as assistant conductor, conductor, and chorus master with the New York City Opera. After several years with the Boston Symphony as assistant conductor, he returned to the New York City Opera as resident conductor in 1969.

In 1973 he left the New York City Opera for a guest-conducting career in the U.S. and Europe. He served several seasons as guest conductor at the Wolf Trap Farm Festival and three summers as conductor of the San Francisco Opera's Merola Program. He has appeared as guest conductor with the Baltimore Opera, the Cincinnati Opera, and the New Orleans Philharmonic.

He has been praised locally both for attracting outstanding performers to Dayton and for his efforts in bringing music to area elementary and high school students.

Erma Bombeck, who graduated from the University of Dayton in 1949 with a major in English, is a self-styled "former home-room mother and obituary writer."

She is also one of the world's most successful humorists. Her column appears in over 800 newspapers; and her latest book, Aunt Erma's Cope Book, had the largest first printing (600,000 copies) of any book ever published. Her previous book, The Grass Is Always Greener Over the Septic Tank, remained on the best-seller list for nearly a year and sold over half a million copies in hardcover. She has written four other books and

appears regularly on ABC-TV's "Good Morning, America."

During high school, Bombeck worked at the Dayton Journal-Herald as a part-time secretary. While at UD she worked at a number of jobs besides writing for the student newspaper. After graduation, she wrote for the Journal-Herald, at first doing obituaries and radio listings. After her marriage to William Bombeck and the arrival of their first child, Bombeck quit work to be a full-time wife and mother. "I didn't do anything," she says, "except blow up sterilizers for ten or eleven years." Then in 1964 she began writing a column for the Kettering-Cakwood Times. By the late '60s she was syndicated in 200 newspapers and had published her first book.

Bombeck will be awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Humane Lettres as approved by the University board of trustees at graduation ceremonies. The University citation for the honor lauds Bombeck as one of the school's most outstanding alumnae who "has well served the University of Dayton by using her humor and satire to speak for a great number of persons . . . consistently revealing in her humor her deep love for the child and the family." The citation granting the Honorary Doctor of Music to Wendelken-Wilson notes his "dedication to quality, a self-less giving of his talents, a stimulation of creativity, a strong desire for perfection -- all of which are the characteristics of the consummate artist."