
Reaction of Charles University to the Passing of President Václav Havel

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Charles University

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Charles University's academic community wishes to express deep regret over the passing of President Václav Havel. Throughout his life, Václav Havel embodied the ideals that should be a given in this day and age, but they are sadly not. His values, expressed both in his actions and in his life, were closely related to the concepts of democracy, courage, honour and justice – the core concepts of the European civilization. They also correspond with the values embedded in the history of Charles University. Thanks to Havel's personal contribution, the university has been able to freely follow these values again since the Velvet Revolution.

For these and other reasons, Charles University considered Havel a close colleague and gave him the honorary title of doctor honoris causa. On May 30, 1990, the university granted him the doctorate for his remarkable moral and philosophical inspiration for political thinking of all mankind and for his part in the history of our country.

There have been many meetings with Václav Havel in the university's Karolinum building, all of them kind and inspiring. We will all remember his last visit to the Great Hall in 2009, when he attended the ceremony at which his friend Adam Michnik received his honorary doctorate. After the introductions, Havel was greeted with a long, powerful and honest applause. He had all the right to deserve such applause and he always will.

The Czech Republic – and the whole world – is united over the loss of a rare, absolutely exceptional and, at the same time, remarkably modest man. All of us Czechs and Slovaks are indebted to him for our freedom. Without his strength, character, courage and his deep emphasis on the spiritual dimension of our lives, the world would have been a worse place.

Prof. Radim Palouš

Rector of Charles University
(1990-1994)

Prof. Karel Malý

Rector of Charles
University
(1994-2000)

Prof. Ivan Wilhelm

Rector of Charles University
(2000-2006)

Prof. Václav Hampl

Rector of Charles University
(since 2006)