

University of Delaware Honorary Degree

**VALERIE BIDEN
OWENS**
DOCTOR OF LAWS
honoris causa

Trailblazing campaign manager, you earned your bachelor's degree from the University of Delaware and found your calling in politics. You are noted as one of the first women in the United States to have managed a modern U.S. Senatorial campaign as well as a Presidential campaign, having taken the lead on the seven successful senatorial campaigns of your brother, Joseph R. Biden, as well as his two presidential campaigns.

You put your political instinct and know-how to work successfully for numerous other political candidates as well during your 15 years as executive vice president for the media consulting firm Joe Slade White and Company. In that position, you helped lead the company to a winning record of more than 75 percent for its clients, along the way earning numerous Pollie Awards, the industry's equivalent of an Oscar.

In 2014, you were a resident fellow at Harvard University's Institute of Politics at the John F. Kennedy School of Government.

International political consultant, you have trained women the world over how to engage in and influence the political process. Here in the United States, you have served on the National Board of the Women's Leadership Forum of the Democratic National Committee. You have been the keynote speaker at Harvard Law School's International Women's Day and were named by the law school as one of fifty women inspiring change.

In 2016 you were nominated and served as U.S. Senior Advisor to the United Nations 71st General Assembly. You have traveled extensively for nearly two decades with Women's Campaign International to teach women in emerging democracies how to organize and how to develop communication and political skills. Among those who have benefited from your expertise were civil servants and future diplomats in Afghanistan, women leaders in government and business in Azerbaijan, and leaders from throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Dedicated social and political influencer, since its founding in 2017, you have served as vice chair of the Biden Foundation, an organization whose mission is to advance community colleges, end violence against women, ensure LGBTQ equality, protect children, shape foreign policy, strengthen the middle class, and support military families.

As vice chair of the Biden Institute at the University of Delaware's School of Public Policy and Administration, you help to lead the research and policy center's efforts to influence, shape, and work to solve the most pressing domestic problems facing America.

You have helped your fellow citizens for more than 30 years as a member of the board of the Ministry of Caring, an ecumenical organization in Delaware dedicated to serving poor, homeless, and disadvantaged people. For that work, you were honored with the Ministry's highest award for dedication and service.

Valerie Biden Owens, you have said in the past that you have tried to live up to the principles of your mother's code, one of which was "Be bold, not brash." Indeed, throughout your illustrious career in the political arena, you have exhibited courage, strength, and yes, a boldness that has enabled you to make a difference in this world. For as Duke Vincentio declares in William Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*: "Virtue is bold, and goodness never fearful."

Therefore, under the authority of the Board of Trustees of the University of Delaware, I have the pleasure and honor of conferring upon you, Valerie Biden Owens, the degree of Doctor of Laws *honoris causa* and do declare you entitled to all the rights, honors, and privileges to that degree appertaining throughout the world. In testimony thereof, I am pleased to present to you this diploma.

John R. Cochran
May 26, 2018