Presentation of the Wilbur Lucius Cross Medal
to
Thomas Kaehao Seung

May 30, 1988

Several years after withdrawing from Yuese University to join the Korean Army, in which you served and were decorated as a commissioned officer during the Korean War, you came to Yale and started your education over as a freshman. Although you were a foreigner you made a special effort to take an active part in campus life, were elected President of the Aurelian Senior Honor Society, and graduated summa cum laude in 1958. You attended Yale Law School for a year before commencing graduate studies in philosophy at Yale, leading to your Ph.D. in 1965.

You rose rapidly to the rank of full professor at the University of Texas in Austin. During the 1970s you received Research Fellowships from the Society for Religion in Higher Education, the American Council of Learned Societies and from the National Endowment for the Humanities. In 1986 you accepted the Hartley Burr Alexander Chair of Humanities at Scripps College, only to be wooed back to the University of Texas, where you were named the Jesse H. Jones Regents Professor in the Liberal Arts.

Philosopher, visionary thinker, your first book, on Dante, was praised by our late Sterling Professor, Thomas Bergin, as a "work of genius". From The Fragile Leaves of the Sibyl: Dante's Master Plan to your books on cultural thematics, structuralism, semiotics and Western philosophy, your interdisciplinary work displays the comprehensiveness of a Hegel, the imagination of a Northrop and the clarity and rigor of a Kant. It ranks in range and depth with the foremost philosophers of today.

Inspirational teacher, mentor and friend, avid athlete, author of articles on the martial arts, your students know you as a superb human being, a man of exuberance and passion, whose energy stings their minds into thought. You take joy in the molding and nurturing of young souls.

In recognition of your exemplary teaching and of the works which mark your unique inward journey, the Yale Graduate School Alumni Association takes pride in presenting you with its highest honor, the Wilbur Lucius Cross Medal.