SUNY The State University of New York

Office of the Chancellor

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MEMORANDUM

March 10, 2026

TO: **Members of the Board of Trustees**

FROM: **Dr. John B. King Jr., Chancellor**

SUBJECT: **Naming of an Endowed Professorship at the College of Arts and Sciences at the State University of New York at Buffalo**

Action Requested

The proposed resolution names the Kurt E. Merkel, PhD Professorship in Medicinal Chemistry at the College of Arts and Sciences at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Resolution

I recommend that the Board of Trustees adopt the following resolution:

Whereas, the late Dr. Kurt E. Merkel earned his Ph.D. in 1970 from UB's School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences;

Whereas, upon graduation Dr. Merkel had a distinguished career in pharmaceutical research; and

Whereas, Dr Merkel demonstrated his enduring commitment to UB through a generous estate gift designated to recruit and retain an endowed professor in medicinal chemistry, as well as to establish graduate fellowships to support research and educational activities for students in the Department of Chemistry; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that, in recognition of the philanthropic commitment by Dr. Kurt E Merkel, the Kurt E. Merkel, PhD Professorship in

Medicinal Chemistry at the College of Arts and Sciences at the State University of New York at Buffalo is hereby named.

Background

After graduating from UB, Dr. Merkel had a successful career at Eli Lilly and Company. He was awarded multiple U.S. patents for antibiotics for both human and veterinary applications and his work placed him at the forefront of antimicrobial research during the 1980's. Dr. Merkel's patents are focused on discovering, making, and using new antibiotic drugs – especially ones related to vancomycin, a powerful antibiotic used against serious bacterial infections. These processes protect new antibiotics and the methods for producing them, so drug manufacturers could target dangerous bacteria more effectively; improve existing antibiotics; and manufacture reliably at scale.