Dec. 14, 2011  
Contact: Jack Martin, Office of Public Affairs, 785-864-7100

**KU honorary degree recipient: Sheila C. Bair**

For the degree of Doctor of Laws: Sheila C. Bair, for notable contributions to financial policy

She’s been called many things: hard-edged, unapologetic, blunt, dogged, combative and tough. She’s been labeled “the bailiff,” “a contrarian,” a watchdog, “the lone voice in the wilderness” and “the golden girl of financial regulation.” She’s also been a lawyer, a commissioner and a professor. She was once the second most powerful woman in the world. Most importantly, she was the chairman of the FDIC during an unprecedented time of financial crisis. She was one of the first to warn, as early as 2002, about the subprime mortgage market and from 2006 to 2011 she pushed for financial reform, reshaping the banking industry and mortgage lending markets.

Her efforts were recognized by Forbes, Time and Smart Money, and she received the Better Business Bureau’s Presidential Award for sustained performance that fundamentally changed the marketplace. A lifelong Republican, she has received the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award for her early warnings and dogged criticism of how both Wall Street and the federal government responded to the subprime lending crisis, and the Hubert H. Humphrey Civil Rights Award for her efforts to keep millions of Americans in their homes. In 2010, she delivered the Robert J. Dole Lecture at KU.

A native of Independence, Kan., Bair received a bachelor’s degree in philosophy in 1975 and a law degree in 1978 from KU. She taught briefly at the University of Arkansas Law School, then worked as a civil rights lawyer at the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare before joining the staff of U.S. Sen. Bob Dole. She ran for Congress in 1990, losing by 760 votes. Re-entering public service, Bair held a number of positions, including serving as commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission of the New York Stock Exchange, and at the Department of the Treasury; in 2002, she became the Dean’s Professor of Financial Regulatory Policy at the Isenberg School of Management, University of Massachusetts Amherst, leaving that position to join the FDIC in 2006. Since leaving the FDIC, she has continued to serve the public interest as a senior adviser to the Pew Charitable Trust, providing advice and counsel on ways to ensure fiscal and economic stability and family financial security.

She is also a published author: Her books Rock, Brock, and the Savings Shock and Isabel’s Car Wash provide lucid examples and explanations of the stock market, banking and economic fundamentals for children as well as their parents.

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