

University of Delaware Honorary Degree

PAUL FARMER
DOCTOR OF SCIENCE

Friend to the poor and sick, you grew up in a family of eight in modest and unconventional circumstances, living for more than a decade without running water in a houseboat and on a school bus that had been converted into a mobile home. When money was short one summer, your family picked citrus fruit alongside migrant workers.

While an undergraduate at Duke University, you began working to help farm laborers, including Haitian migrants, who harvested tobacco on North Carolina's plantations. You studied the Creole language and learned about the country of Haiti, the poorest in the Western Hemisphere. After graduating from college, you traveled throughout Haiti on a quest to learn more about the people and their lives. There, on the island's remote and neglected central plateau, you discovered a community of people living lives of squalid poverty, without access to clean water or medical care. Many of the people suffered from malaria, tuberculosis, and typhoid. You asked yourself, "Why? Why shouldn't poor people have access to medical care and drugs when they are sick?" And you set about to change that.

Pioneering physician, you earned both a medical degree and a doctorate in medical anthropology from Harvard while continuing to work for much of the year to bring about change in Cange, Haiti.

You are a founding director of the community health-based project Zanmi Lasante, or Partners in Health in English, that began in 1985 with a one-room clinic in Cange, Haiti, and now encompasses a complete hospital with a surgical wing, women's and pediatric clinics, a nursing school, a primary school, and a training program for health-outreach workers. Zanmi Lasante also has built schools and homes and brought communal sanitation and clean water facilities throughout Haiti's central plateau.

What you have accomplished in medical care in Haiti has been nothing short of revolutionary. The work of Zanmi Lasante has dramatically reduced malnutrition and infant mortality. It has stemmed the spread of AIDS, leading the World Health Organization to adopt its methods for controlling AIDS for over 30 countries.

Your successes in Haiti tell just part of the story. Partners in Health now works in Boston and in the Navajo Nation. Abroad, its locations include not only Haiti but also Rwanda, Lesotho, Malawi, Mexico, Russia, Peru, the Dominican Republic, and Kazakhstan.

For many years you worked in relative obscurity, until Tracy Kidder wrote his book *Mountains Upon Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World*.

Leader in community health education, your mission to spread health-care equity worldwide has motivated your teaching, publishing, and speaking engagements. You are Chief of the Division of Global Health Equity at Brigham and Women's Hospital as well as Kolokotronis University Professor and Chair of the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School. From 2009 to 2012 you served as the United Nations Deputy Special Envoy for Haiti, under Special Envoy Bill Clinton. In December 2012 you were named Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Community-Based Medicine and Lessons from Haiti.

You have written extensively about health, human rights, and the consequences of social inequality. Your numerous books include your most recent, *To Repair the World: Paul Farmer Speaks to the Next Generation*, a collection of your speeches that was published this spring.

One of your most powerful influences was German physician and public health pioneer Rudolf Virchow, who believed, as you do, in the necessity of combining pathology, social medicine, politics, and anthropology. It was Virchow who called physicians "the natural attorneys of the poor," and that is a role you have taken to heart. Dr. Farmer, you have fought for the poor, you have argued their cases, and, in countless instances, you have won justice for them. In so doing, you have brought us that much closer to the goal of health equity.

Therefore, under the authority of the Board of Trustees of the University of Delaware, I have the pleasure and honor of conferring upon you, Paul Farmer, the degree of Doctor of Science 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.

A. Gilchrist Sparks III
May 25, 2013

The honorary degree is the highest honor the University of Delaware bestows and is presented to individuals whose contributions to the public good warrant exceptional recognition.