

## University of Haifa

The Senate of the University of Haifa, by virtue of the authority vested in it by the constitution of the University and in accordance with the recommendations of the President and the Executive Committee

hereby confers upon

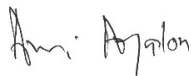
**Carol Padden**

the degree of

### **Doctor of Philosophy, Honoris Causa**

In recognition of excellence that knows no boundaries: on her pioneering and ongoing contribution to the study of sign language, to understanding the culture of deaf people, and to the study of the nature and development of human language; on her fruitful academic collaboration with researchers of the Sign Language Research Laboratory at the University of Haifa, which heightened the international status of this joint work, and with researchers in the Faculty of Education; for inspiring us through her achievements as a person and as a deaf woman – achievements that are praiseworthy for recognizing that departures from the usual are not handicaps, but opportunities for understanding the inherent value of diversity in the human condition.

Conferred in 15 Sivan 5775/June 2, 2015  
Haifa, Israel




**Ami Ayalon**

Chairman of the Executive Committee



**Amos Shapira**

President



**Prof. David Faraggi**

Rector



## PROFESSOR CAROL A. PADDEN

Carol Padden was born to a deaf family in Washington, D.C. She initially attended a school for deaf children but in third grade moved to a public school, a move she would equate, with hindsight, as being akin to a transition from a small neighborhood school to studying in another country. Her interest in language and culture is rooted in those formative experiences of “moving between languages and between different worlds” – between the hearing environment and the familiarity of signed language in her home environment. Professor Padden earned a B.S. (Linguistics) from Georgetown University (1978) and her Ph.D., Linguistics, from the University of California in San Diego (1983), which has been her academic home ever since.

Professor Padden’s thesis, which focused on the interaction between morphology and syntax in American Sign Language (ASL), was published in 1988 as an outstanding dissertation in linguistics. In this work, and in her early research studies in the coming years, she addressed the ways in which sign languages exploit space to encode and express the grammatical structure of language. In her studies she documented, *inter alia*, how people who sign systematically make use of the signing space to address the different topics being discussed. Her pioneering work in this field was crucially important to how this research field has developed, and paved the way to conducting linguistic research of sign languages as natural languages, to all intents and purposes like spoken languages.

Alongside linguistic research, Professor Padden was one of the first people to study deaf society as a cultural group. Her book, *Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture*, had wide-ranging influence because of the originality of its analysis, which suggested that being a member of deaf society is an empowering experience. It positioned the hearing world as a possible way of life, but did not see it as inevitable or necessarily desirable. The book, co-authored with Tom Humphries, was published in the US (1988), and later translated into German (1991) and Japanese (2003). From this perspective, Prof. Padden investigates the social contexts of sign languages and the historical factors influencing their use. Her work addresses the obstacles to the interaction and integration of deaf culture into hearing culture, and reveals the diversity between deaf people in different societies.

More recently she has turned her attention to the development of young sign languages. In this context, Professor Padden and her colleagues, Professor Wendy Sandler and Professor Irit Meir of the University of Haifa, and Professor Mark Aronoff of Stony Brook University in New York, investigate not only the particular languages and their characteristics, but also profound questions concerning language in general, and the whole evolution of human language.

The sign language of the Al-Sayyid Bedouin tribe in the Negev, for example, arose independently about 80 years ago and initially developed without contact with other sign languages. The research conducted by Padden and her colleagues into the tribe’s sign language illuminates the ways in which hand gestures integrate with body gestures and facial expressions to create grammatical structure. Moreover, the linguistic complexity of the young language, the word order patterns, and the ability to describe abstract concepts in words, indicate that creation of a language is based on innate human cognitive abilities, and develops as a result of constant interaction between people in a community.

These insights are closely aligned to fundamental issues in the nature and evolution of language, and the cooperation between Professor Padden and her colleagues placed the Sign Language Research Laboratory at the University of Haifa at the forefront of global research. In addition, research relations between Professor Padden and the University of Haifa led to collaboration with Professor Paul Miller of the Faculty of Education at the University on an international research project about reading among deaf people in different written languages.

Carol Padden has published five books and more than 60 articles. In recognition of her personal achievements and academic contributions, she was named a MacArthur Fellow (2010) and a Guggenheim Fellow (1992-3).

Professor Padden has served as Associate Dean and Faculty Equity Advisor in Social Sciences (2008-2013) and then as Interim Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, both at UC San Diego. In June 2014, she was elected Dean of the Division of Social Sciences.