



# BOWDOIN COLLEGE

## Commencement

2024



**DAVID J. ROUX**, Doctor of Humane Letters

Citation by Philip Camill, *Rusack Professor of Environmental Studies and Earth and Oceanographic Science*  
and the *Director of Environmental Studies Program*

David Roux, visionary investor, innovative entrepreneur, and focused philanthropist, you ushered in a new era in investing in technology, and now you are ushering in a new era of investing in Maine. Fresh out of Harvard Business School, you cofounded the first commercial CD-ROM publishing company, Dertext, later sold to Lotus. That success jumpstarted a career that would take you to top positions at Lotus, at Oracle, and then at Liberated Technologies. When you and your partners left your corporate jobs to establish Silver Lake, a private equity firm that would invest in a different type of tech companies than the start-ups targeted by venture capital, it was a bet that was big and bold, and it paid off handsomely. Silver Lake became one of the biggest private equity firms in the world, and you had the means to apply your creative thinking not just to your business but also to other changes that you and your wife, Barbara, wanted to effect in the world. You have said that, for you, philanthropy must be meaningful, fundamental, and “be something I can do something about.”

At Bowdoin, we were a beneficiary of that thinking in 2015, when you created a President’s Discretionary Fund with a \$10 million dollar gift. That gift funded our Roux Center for the Environment, accelerating interdisciplinarity and supporting environmental learning and teaching at Bowdoin. In 2020, Northeastern University announced the launch of the Roux Institute in Portland, backed by a \$100 million gift from you and Barbara. The program will be built at Northeastern, and the benefits will be Maine’s and northern New England’s, but the idea was all yours: the innovation economy cannot exist in just a handful of cities, it must be brought to cities all over the country, and it must begin with education in cutting-edge technology skills-building.

Your strategic, thoughtful, and deeply intentional approach to investing is reflected in the way you invest in people, programs, and ideas. We are fortunate that you are tied to both Bowdoin and Maine by your family and your upbringing. A leader who sees change coming through chaos and complexity, a philanthropist who gives generously your intellect, ideas, and resources to many causes, and a board member whose wisdom and big thinking make every organization you serve better, you offer Maine a gift of technological and economic sea change with your vision.

President Zaki, on behalf of the College, I am honored to present David J. Roux for the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*.