Outstanding alumni

Birmingham has a proud tradition of producing graduates who go on to achieve greatness in their chosen fields. Here we celebrate many of our outstanding alumni.

These include:

- **Alumni of the year (/alumni/ouralumni/outstandingalumni/Alumni-of-the-year/Alumni-of-the-year.aspx)**
- **Famous alumni (/alumni/ouralumni/outstandingalumni/Famous-alumni.aspx)**
- **Honorary graduates (/alumni/ouralumni/outstandingalumni/Honorary-graduates.aspx)**
- **Nobel Prize winners (/alumni/ouralumni/nobelprizewinners/index.aspx)**

Below is a selection of some of our alumni and why we think they're outstanding:

Open all sections

Dr Simon Campbell CBE FRS FMedSci

Dr Campbell graduated from Birmingham with a 1st Class BSc in Chemistry in 1962 and a PhD in Chemistry in 1965. He was awarded an honorary DSc from Birmingham in 2004.
His postdoctoral research was carried out in Chile and Stanford and following a faculty position at the University of Sao Paulo Brazil, he joined Pfizer in 1972.

Why he is outstanding

Innovative research by Dr Campbell and his team at Pfizer at Sandwich in Kent led to the discovery of amlodipine (Norvasc/Istin), sildenafil (Viagra) and doxazosin (Cardura), which all became some of the world's best selling prescription drugs.

Did you know?

Dr Campbell retired as Pfizer's head of research in 1998, but still acts as a scientific advisor.

Professor Sir Charles George KT

Sir Charles is a true knight of medicine; making a difference to people's lives.

Professor Sir Charles George graduated from Birmingham with an Intercalated BSc in Anatomy (1962) and an MBChB in Medicine (1965), before moving to Southampton to take his MD (1974). He also has an Honorary DSc (2003).

Why he is outstanding

Sir Charles' early career included four years at Hammersmith Hospital before he moved into tutoring medicine and clinical pharmacology at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School.

He then joined the University of Southampton, where he became Professor of Clinical Pharmacology and served six years as Dean of Medicine and three years as Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Biological Sciences.

His career highlights include acting as Chairman of the General Medical Council's Education Committee, BMA President and Chair of the BMA's Board of Science & Education. In 1999 he joined the British Heart Foundation and was a member of the government's Task Force for Coronary Heart Disease and the Scientific Advisory Committee of the Association of Medical Research Charities until 2004.

He was knighted for services to medicine and medical education in 1998.

Did you know?

Professor Sir Charles George is a native Brummie and credits the University of Birmingham as having a major role in his life.

General Sir Mike Jackson GCB CBE

Arguably Britain's most famous soldier, General Sir Mike Jackson graduated from Birmingham in 1967 with a BSocSc in Russian Studies and in 2000 received an honorary LLD.

Why he is outstanding

The former head of the British Army, General Sir Mike Jackson has always been a force to be reckoned with and has never been afraid to speak his mind.

Born into a military family, Sir Mike was commissioned into the Army at the age of 19 before undertaking his degree course at Birmingham. After a few years with the Intelligence Corps he rose to command the First Battalion of the Parachute Regiment between 1984 and 1986. He also commanded the 3rd (UK) Division, spent two years at the Ministry of Defence and served in Berlin and Northern Ireland.

Sir Mike commanded a NATO division in Bosnia, before he commanded the Alliance's Rapid Reaction Corps. He won a Distinguished Service Order for his leadership of the Kosovo Force in the successful operation to end ethnic cleansing of Albanians in the former Yugoslav republic. He ended his military career as Chief of the General Staff - the professional head of the Army.

Did you know?

Sir Mike's son, Mark, followed him into the military and served as a paratrooper in the Gulf before becoming an artist.

Paul Manning MBE

Pure gold: one of Britain's most successful cyclists, Paul graduated from Birmingham in 1996 with a BSc in Geology.

Why he is outstanding

Paul is a professional cyclist who won the gold medal in Team Pursuit Cycling at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

With his team mates Ed Clancy, Geraint Thomas and Bradley Wiggins, he reached the finals of the Team Pursuit competition in style, setting a new world record in their semi-final ride against Russia. In the final against the Danish team they then shaved a further two seconds off that time, overlapping their opponents in the process.

Now retired, Paul can add his Olympic gold to bronze at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, a silver medal at the 2004 Athens Olympics and the World Championship title in 2005, 2007 and 2008.

Did you know?

In 2009, Paul was inducted into the British Cycling Hall of Fame alongside fellow greats Chris Boardman, Graeme Obree and Mandy Jones.

Mehmuda Mian

Upholding fair principles in public life, Mehmuda Mian graduated from Birmingham in 1984 with an LLB in Law and French.

Why she is outstanding

Standards are very important to Mehmuda Mian, who has spent much of her career upholding fair principles in public life.

Named on the Muslim Women Power List 2009, Mehmuda is a trustee of the BBC Trust and a former Commissioner of the Independent Police Complaints Commission, who has also worked as a non-executive director of the NHS Litigation Authority and a member of the Police Complaints Authority.

Her work with the BBC includes sitting on the Editorial Standards Committee, the final stage of the broadcaster's complaints process, deciding whether there has been any breach of editorial guidelines and any necessary remedial action. The committee dealt with 70 complaints last year, including the offensive on-air phone call that led to the three-month suspension of presenter Jonathan Ross.

Outside of the BBC Trust, Mehmuda is an Associate Director of the Lokahi Foundation, a charity which undertakes academic research that informs its projects on the ground in the areas of religion, beliefs and culture and their impact on society. These projects include Campus Salaam, which primarily supports Muslim students in dialogue and engagement using the Campus Salaam website and Lokahi support team. Recent events include 'Rumble in Westminster' where controversial subjects were debated and participants learnt how to deal with heckling and aggressive behaviour.

Did you know?

Although she is passionate about standards, Mehmuda's vivacious personality is far removed from that of the infamous morality campaigner Mary Whitehouse. She enjoys travelling and abseiling, which she recently tried for the first time.

Dr Desmond Morris

Lifelong love of animals shapes the career of painter, television presenter and bestselling author

Dr Desmond Morris graduated from Birmingham in 1951 with a BSc in Zoology

Why he is outstanding

During a career spanning more than six decades, Dr Desmond Morris has never followed the obvious path.

Despite being an academic by training, Dr Morris became a household name in the 1950s as the presenter of Zootime, the UK's first wildlife television series aimed at children. The weekly programmes were broadcast live from a special, residential studio in London Zoo for 11 years, and viewers were fascinated with regularly featured animals included Congo the chimpanzee, who became famous for the paintings he completed under Dr Morris' observation.

Dr Morris is also the author of more than 60 books including Manwatching, through which he is credited with introducing the now popular concept of body language, and The Naked Ape, which remains one of the bestselling books of all time. The book was the first to study man in purely animal terms, including our habits of sleeping, feeding, mating, fighting and rearing young, and went on to be translated into 23 languages.

In parallel to his scientific career, Dr Morris is also a respected painter whose works have been exhibited everywhere from London, Rome and Paris to New York and Sydney, and have sold for many thousands of pounds at auction. He continues to paint from his Oxford studio, now one of just three surviving members of the original surrealist movement.

Did you know?

Dr Morris still keeps an old school report which states: 'He does not have a great deal of intelligence but he will make the most of it.'

Amanda Ross

Often described as one of the most powerful women in publishing, Amanda Ross graduated from Birmingham in 1984 with a BA in Drama and Theatre Arts

Why she is outstanding

Amanda has brought reading to the masses through television book clubs. As Managing Director of Cactus TV, she was the driving force behind the Richard and Judy Book Club and created the TV Book Club for Channel 4.

In 2009, she received The Bookseller Retail Award for Outstanding Contribution to Bookselling. Judges felt she deserved industry recognition for delivering a £185 million boost to the trade, creating at least 50 bestsellers, for raising the profile of countless authors and for championing reading as a pastime for all.

Founded by Amanda and her husband Simon in 1994, Cactus TV specialises in entertainment, features and chat shows, producing more than 40 television programmes

including Saturday Kitchen on BBC1, The TV Book Club on More 4, the Hairy Bikers' Food Tour of Britain on BBC2, and the Crime Thriller Season on ITV3.

Did you know?

Amanda is married to Simon Ross, brother of Jonathan and Paul.

Cilla Snowball CBE

From trainee to advertising guru, Cilla graduated from the University of Birmingham in 1981 with a BA in French.

Why she is outstanding

Cilla Snowball is Group Chairman and Chief Executive of the advertising and communications company Abbott Mead Vickers (AMV).

After leaving University, Cilla joined Allen Brady & Marsh as a trainee but moved to Ogilvy & Mather in 1983, where she managed accounts for well known companies such as Rowntree and Lever Brothers. She joined AMV in 1992 and has worked there ever since; in senior management positions for the past nine years, rising to agency head and now country head. AMV Group employs more than 900 people in the UK and clients include Sainsbury's, BT and Guinness.

She was awarded the CBE for services to the advertising industry in January 2009.

Did you know?

In 2010, the *Guardian* ranked Cilla as the 50th most influential person in the media sector and withing in the top ten highest ranking women.

Chrissie Wellington MBE

A triple world champion in one of the most gruelling sporting events on the planet, Chrissie graduated from Birmingham in 1998 with a First Class degree in Geography.

Why she is outstanding

British triathlete Chrissie Wellington is the triple reigning World Ironman Champion (2007, 2008 and 2009).
Since she left her desk job working for the government to turn professional in February 2007, she has dominated the women's Ironman Triathlon scene.

Shortly after winning her first Ironman competition in August 2007 in Korea, Chrissie became Britain's first ever Ironman World Champion in the same year. She successfully defended her title in 2008 then again in 2009, where she broke the 17-year-old course record and finishing behind only 22 men. In July 2010, she broke her own World Ironman Distance Record by an incredible 12 minutes. Chrissie now remains undefeated at the Ironman distance, winning nine out of nine races.

In November 2009, readers of The Sunday Times newspaper voted her as their Sportswoman of the Year. She was awarded an MBE in 2010.

Did you know?

Chrissie describes her two passions in life as 'sport and development', and has previously spoken about her time teaching children at a school in Boston, Massachusetts as one that shows sport can have a major impact on young people's lives.

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