

## 80-year-old Mary will Graduate Today

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An 80-year-old postgraduate student will graduate from the University of Birmingham today as part of degree congregations this week.

Mary Wong of Selly Oak, Birmingham has completed an MPhil(B) in Quaker Studies in the Department of Theology and Religion.

She spent three years working on the part-time course under supervision at Woodbrooke Quaker Studies Centre and is delighted with her achievement. She says: "I found the whole experience exciting – especially talking with other people from all over the world. I didn't want a career in academia because I wanted to live and talk alongside people, rather than compete with them."

Mary was born in China, where her parents were missionaries. Her choice of degree was driven largely by a desire to investigate what had taken her parents to China.

The family traveled back to the UK when she was four, returning to Birmingham where her grandfather had been Secretary of the project to provide the city's water from the Elan Valley.

Throughout a varied teaching career, some of it in China, Mary has always felt a connection with Birmingham and graduating from the city's university means a great deal to her: "I love Birmingham. I feel so connected to the city; my first English city."

This is the second time Mary is collecting an award from the University. After graduating at 20 in Modern History from Oxford, she turned to Birmingham for a postgraduate diploma in Social Studies. She then studied for an MA in Social Studies Planning at the University of Essex.

Mary is a Quaker and she says, "One of my reasons for doing this is to encourage people to carry on their work for peace in a changing world. The more we can talk with and understand other people - and realize that we are not always right - the better."

And Mary's studies don't stop here. She is now planning to continue improving her Chinese language skills – and to spend time with her grandchildren.

### Notes to Editors:

Mary studied her M(Phil) in Quaker Studies at the Graduate Institute for Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Birmingham, under supervision at Woodbrooke Quaker Studies Centre, an honorary member of the Department of Theology and Religion.

Mary's congregation ceremony will take place at 13.45 on 12 July.

Mary is available for interview; please contact the Press Office to arrange.

### Further Media information:

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