

Alastair Campbell to ponder nature of happiness at 2011 Baggs lecture

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Former Downing Street director of communications and one of the architects of New Labour Alastair Campbell will deliver the University of Birmingham's 2011 **Baggs memorial lecture** (</events/baggs/2012.aspx>) on Tuesday July 12 at 6.00pm.

The ex-political editor and chief political columnist of the Daily Mirror is best known for his one-time role as spokesman, press secretary and strategic adviser to Prime Minister Tony Blair, having played a key role in shaping New Labour and returning the Party to power in 1997. He remains active in Labour politics today and is passionate about sport, fair access to education and charity.

In 2008 he broadcast an award-winning BBC documentary about the nervous breakdown he suffered in 1986 and he continues to campaign to break down the stigma around mental illness. He is also chair of fundraising for the charity Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research and earlier in the day will be making a private tour of the University's Centre for Clinical Haematology, headed by Professor Charlie Craddock.

Highly sought to speak at events around the world, Alastair Campbell will be signing copies of all of his published books - including volume three of his account of life at the centre of the Blair Government, Power and Responsibility 1999-2001 - before and after Tuesday's event.

The Baggs Memorial Lecture began in 1976. Thomas Baggs was an alumnus of the University of Birmingham who went on to become a teacher, journalist and a war correspondent for the Daily Mail before pursuing a successful career in advertising and publicity for the USA automobile industry. When he died in 1973 Thomas bequeathed a substantial sum to the University to provide for an annual public lecture on the theme of 'Happiness - what it is and how it may be achieved by individuals as well as nations.'

This lecture series has seen many distinguished speakers tackle the topic of happiness from their personal viewpoint including Yehudi Menuhin, David Attenborough, Peter Ustinov, Maureen Lipman, David Lodge, Adam Hart Davies, Robert Winston and Sue Lawley. The lecture takes place at the University of Birmingham's Great Hall in the Aston Webb building.

This is a ticket only event and is now full.

Notes to editors

For more information please contact Jenni Ameghino, Press Office, University of Birmingham, +44 (0)121 415 8134. Mobile 07768 924156.

- Alastair Campbell will be available for interview on a first come first served basis at the University of Birmingham at 2.45pm on Tuesday July 12.
- Book-signing sessions will take place in the Chancellor's Court marquee at 5pm and 7pm.

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