

Honorary graduands for July 2012

Posted on Thursday 28th June 2012

A former Conservative Home Office Minister and the Director of the BBC National Orchestra are amongst those who will be given honorary degrees at the University of Birmingham graduation ceremonies in July 2012.

Ann Widdecombe and David Murray join 15 honorary graduands and more than 5000 students who will collect their degrees at 18 ceremonies in the University's iconic Great Hall (4th – 12th July).

Honorary graduates joining the students include:

Ann Widdecombe - Doctor of the University

Thursday 5 July 2012

Ann Widdecombe was a Member of Parliament for Maidstone, and then Maidstone and The Weald from 1987 until her retirement in 2010. Previous to her parliamentary career Ann worked in marketing at Unilever, and as a senior administrator at London University. Ann has held several parliamentary positions including Minister of State for the Department of Employment, Minister of State for the Home Office, and Shadow Health Secretary. She has enjoyed a successful writing career penning a number of books one of which, *The Clematis Tree*, rose to number eight in the Times Best Seller List.

David Murray - Doctor of Music

Friday 6 July

David Murray is the Director of the BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales. He studied music at the University of Birmingham, graduating with first class honours. After a period of research, David joined the BBC Radio 3 Music Department. He has held senior posts at EMI Classics and Deutsche Grammophon, and has won an abundance of major international classical awards. David has close links with the CBSO and helped design the acoustics of Symphony Hall. In his current position David's concert hall home is the BBC Hoddinott Hall in Cardiff Bay, a purpose-built hall which David led.

Randal Keynes OBE - Doctor of the University

Wednesday 4 July

Randal Keynes OBE is a British author and conservationist. As great-great-grandson of Charles Darwin, Randal has worked tirelessly to make Darwin's life, work and legacy accessible to a wide audience. Randal's book, *Annie's Box*, is an exploration of his famous ancestry and is the book on which CREATION was based. Randal has taken a leading role in the campaign to have Down House, Darwin's former home, designated as a World Heritage site.

Professor Alan Thorpe – Doctor of Science

Monday 9 July

Professor Alan Thorpe is the Director-General of the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts. He has previously held senior positions at the UK's Natural Environment Research Council, the Met Office's Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research, and was Chairman of the Executive Group of Research Councils. Alan has published over 110 papers in atmospheric science and has played major roles in international research programmes such as FASTEX (Fronts & Atlantic Storm Tracks Experiment) and THORPEX (The Observing System Research and Predictability Experiment).

Dame Sue Ion DBE – Doctor of Science

Tuesday 10 July

Dame Sue Ion is a Non-Executive Director on the Board of the Laboratory of the UK Health and Safety Executive. She has an extensive knowledge of the nuclear fuel cycle and has been a member of the UK Council for Science and Technology, the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council and the EPSRC (Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council). Dame Sue represents the UK on several international Committees and is the Royal Academy of Engineering's representative on the Energy Research Partnership.

Dr Andrew Vallance Owen – Doctor of the University

Wednesday 11 July

Dr Andrew Vallance-Owen graduated from the Birmingham Medical School in 1976 and is currently Chair of the Guild Trustee Board. A trained surgeon, he joined the staff of the British Medical Association as Scottish Secretary, and then Head of Policy. He recently retired from BUPA, where he was accountable for the safety and quality of care of BUPA's 11 million customers. He is a keen advocate of improved doctor-patient communications, measurement of clinical performance and shared decision making, and is actively involved in the fields of healthcare and education, including chairmanship of UK Trade and Investment's Healthcare Business Group.

Kevin Issac – Doctor of the University

Thursday 12 July

His Excellency Mr Kevin M. Isaac has had an extensive career as a diplomat. He is the youngest and first career diplomat of the Federation of St Kitts and Nevis to be elevated to the rank of High Commissioner/Ambassador. He is a graduate of the Universities of Toulouse-Mirail, West Indies, Birmingham and Warwick. He is the St Kitts and Nevis Permanent Representative to the International Maritime Organisation, and Governor on the Board of the Commonwealth Secretariat. High Commissioner Isaac is also a published poet.

ENDS

For further information

Samantha Williams, Press Office, University of Birmingham, tel 0121 414 6029



