

Linda Jackson, Hon DLitt

Thursday 22nd January 2026

Orator: Professor Kerry Kirwan, Dean of WMG

Chancellor,

Our honorary graduand this afternoon is a true pioneer: the first British woman to have run a global automotive company. I am delighted to introduce LINDA JACKSON.

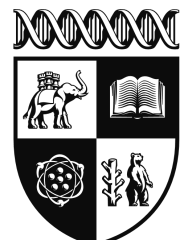
Linda has had a stellar career in the automotive industry, rising to become CEO of Citroen in 2014 and of Peugeot from 2021 until her retirement last year. She came to these important positions via a non-traditional route: her background was in finance rather than engineering. Starting out at Rover, she became Finance Director for Rover France in 1998 and European Finance Controller for MG Rover in 2004; she was appointed Finance Director UK for Citroen in 2005 and moved to same role for Citroen France in 2009.

Linda's talents and achievements in the financial sphere enabled her to move seamlessly into the roles of Managing Director, Citroen and Ireland in 2010 and of CEO at Citroen four years later.

Linda has spent her entire career in the automotive industry. In a sector that remains largely male dominated – she is only the third woman overall to have run a global automotive company – she has been a trailblazer.

She is passionate about empowering women and those from non-traditional backgrounds in the automotive industry. She has been hugely supportive of the Women Automotive Network, a global community that promotes diversity and inclusion in the industry. She emphasises the need to change perceptions of the automotive industry which, through digitalisation, for example, now opens up new opportunities for women.

Memorably, she has urged the industry to abandon the stereotype of 'men as the car mechanics and car buyers and women as the meek and mild partners who like pink and can't park'!



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Linda is equally passionate about sustainability. She emphasises electrification and the need for Electric Vehicles to become more accessible, but also stresses the importance of changes in batteries and of alternative fuels. She is clear about the industry's need to become carbon neutral, and to use more recycled materials in its vehicles. She drove Peugeot's transition to electrification, securing its place as a leader in electric mobility, spearheaded its project to become carbon neutral by 2038, and successfully promoted increased use of recycled material in its manufacturing.

Born in Coventry, Linda retains a strong commitment to the West Midlands. She is one of the most successful business leaders the region has produced.

She spent a large part of her career here, working for the Rover Group, Land Rover and Jaguar. Rover sponsored her Executive MBA here in 1990. Linda studied for this in the evenings – no mean feat after a day's work! Here, she learnt from the diversity of her fellow students, who, though from different professional backgrounds, all had similar problems: the MBA furnished them with common tools that could be used in any industry and gave them a logical way of facing issues. She describes her MBA as 'the backbone' of where she is today.

Linda's achievements have been recognised by many prestigious awards, including, most recently, The Guild of Motoring Writers' President's Award (2024). We are delighted to add our own award this afternoon.

Chancellor: in the name of the Senate, I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*, LINDA JACKSON

