

Dr Phil O'Donovan FREng, Hon DSc

19 July 2024, pm

Provost

Our honorary graduand this afternoon is an engineer and one of the UK's most successful entrepreneurs. I am delighted to introduce DR PHIL O'DONOVAN.

The foundations for Phil's impressive career were laid here at Warwick, where he graduated with a degree in Electrical Engineering Science in 1971. Following a PhD at the University of Essex, he moved into a career in research in communications technology. He worked for AERE Harwell, ITT Standard Telecommunication Laboratories and in 1991, moved as Head of Telecoms Practice at Cambridge Consultants Ltd. It was here that in 1998 he co-founded the spin-out company, Cambridge Silicon Radio (CSR). As Managing Director, Phil helped the company to establish an early lead in the Bluetooth chip market. By 2003, CSR had become the largest global supplier of Bluetooth chips; the following year it joined the London Stock Exchange as CSR plc, became a FTSE 250 company and won a Queen's Award for Enterprise. In 2005, the CSR

team won the MacRobert Gold Medal – the premier UK award for outstanding innovation in engineering. By 2012, CSR plc had an annual revenue of \$1billion. By 2015, it had shipped three billion chips across the globe, employed more than 2,000 people in 23 locations, and was acquired for \$2.5 billion by US-based Qualcomm.

As a technology start-up, CSR is one of the UK's biggest commercial success stories. Phil now uses the expertise gained there to inspire and enable the development of other start-up companies. He is a member of the Cambridge Angels – investors in start-up companies in the Cambridge region – and a mentor and coach to emerging communications, software and device companies, aiming to help them grow in revenue and market capitalisation and to become UK-based, globally operating, companies. He is also an advisor to companies, and universities wishing to commercialise their intellectual property (IP).

Phil has personal experience of the value of academics and business working together – projects on which he worked for STL involved collaboration with universities in the UK and abroad, and he has worked with Warwick Ventures to support our own entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Phil is a sought-after speaker at universities and business schools on entrepreneurial topics and has given valuable advice to Warwick students. He has supported WBS's monthly Entrepreneurial Clinic and since 2019 has been a regular guest lecturer on the Entrepreneurial Finance module of our MBA programme 'Building a Global Company'. He has also worked with the School of Engineering, lecturing on 'Starting a Comms Company', and leading a seminar for undergraduates studying the Mechanical Engineering Design Module.

Phil is an inspirational role model for current and would-be entrepreneurs, exemplifying what he calls the 'who dares wins' attitude he absorbed as an undergraduate at Warwick. He has been an Entrepreneur in Residence at Cambridge and a Fellow of the Judge Business School. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering in 2017, and in 2019 was awarded an honorary degree by the University of Essex. It is a great pleasure to welcome him back to Warwick to add our own honour today.

Provost: in the name of the Senate, I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*, PHIL O'DONOVAN.

