

Sir David Normington, Chancellors Medal

Wednesday 23 July 2025

Orator: Professor Stuart Croft, Vice-Chancellor & President

I am delighted to present our Chancellor's Medallist, the University's retiring Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council: SIR DAVID NORMINGTON.

Our Chancellor's Medal is awarded to an individual who has made a valuable and significant contribution to the work of this University. For fourteen years, Sir David has served Warwick voluntarily and tirelessly, first as an independent member of Council – the University's governing body – and latterly as Chair of Council and Pro-Chancellor. Independent members of Council are an essential part of our governance, bringing to our deliberations a valuable external perspective and individual expertise. David came to us from a long and distinguished career in the civil service, including four years as Permanent Secretary at the Department for Education and Skills, whose remit included higher education, and culminating in the position of Permanent Secretary at the Home Office, one of the three great departments of State. David has also been First Civil Service Commissioner and Commissioner for Public Appointments, regulating appointments to the civil service and public bodies. As a member of our Council from 2011 to 2017, his expertise proved invaluable in its major committees such as the Nominations Committee, and the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

David became Chair of Council in 2017. His time as chair has covered a challenging period for higher education, as we navigated the post-Brexit landscape and the Covid pandemic, and faced uncertainty over tuition fees and finance, while throughout there has been a lack of a clear national strategy for the sector. Throughout these often-turbulent times, David has been a calm and steady presence, always giving wise counsel and advice.

As my boss, he has been demanding and supportive; focused and determined; a true critical friend.

He was clear that we needed to improve our Teaching Excellence Framework position which we did, moving to the highest rating, Gold, on all measures. He has been clear that we need to be a comprehensive university of a wide range of departments and was a strong supporter of the development and opening of the Faculty of Arts building. His focus on widening participation – rooted in his own experience as a Bradford grammar school boy – encouraged the development of our Warwick Scholars programme. He has been passionate that the University should grow with quality, and we have developed our extraordinary STEM and Social Science Connect Programmes; one billion pounds of investment on our campus over the next several years.

David has been an exemplary Chair of Council, meticulous in his preparation, always encouraging members to have their say, while still managing to end the meeting in a timely fashion. He continued in this way when, during the Pandemic, Council meetings were held online. He has never been a particular fan of the online meeting compared to face to face, but was always able to handle even difficult conversations online with ease. David was always particularly keen to hear the views of Council's student representatives, and in every decision, considered its implications for our students' experience as well as for Warwick's staff. We are immensely grateful for David's outstanding contribution to this University and are delighted to award him the Chancellor's Medal today.

Chancellor, on behalf of the University, I present to you for the award of the Chancellor's Medal: SIR DAVID NORMINGTON.