



WARWICK
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

The Lady Butterworth of Warwick

**Oration by Emeritus Professor Stuart Palmer
Former Deputy Vice-Chancellor**



The Lady Butterworth of Warwick

This ceremony is very special, firstly of course for all of you graduating today and may I add my congratulations to you. It is also a special moment in the history of the University of Warwick. You will all be able to say in years to come that "I was there!"

We are here to award the 2017 Benefactors' Medal which is awarded to recognise the deep and enduring impact of the philanthropic support that the recipient of the medal has given to the University. I am delighted that this year's recipient is Doris, Lady Butterworth of Warwick, Doris Butterworth, (dearest Doris). I am delighted to welcome her to today's degree congregation, it is in the Butterworth Hall after all! I am truly honoured and privileged to be able to deliver the oration.

The University was founded in 1965 and the responsibility for the success of the University was bestowed on Jack Butterworth, Lord Butterworth of Warwick who was appointed as the first Vice-Chancellor. The appointment was an enormous success but the credit must go, not just to Lord Butterworth, but to his wife Doris in equal measure. The Butterworth partnership at the head of the University continued for 20 years by which time Warwick was well on track to achieve the successes that we see all around us.

Doris was actively involved in the University from the outset. We have Emeritus Professors with us today, who were there at the beginning. They will have memories of the legendary social events that took place under Doris' guidance at the VC's residence, then on the Kenilworth Road. Doris was awarded an Honorary MA by the University in 1986, following Jack's retirement the year before. A renowned charity and community worker, Doris has been actively involved in local volunteering and fundraising projects.

For example, she became involved in the task of transforming Warwickshire's mental health hospital at Hatton where she pioneered the visits by volunteers onto the wards, helping to generate mutual respect, openness and dignity. Her work was recognised nationally with her appointment as Chair of the National Association of Voluntary Help Organisers and she is now President of The Women's Council. The Council promotes Friendship between women of Asian countries, and the UK, and improves the care of children with disabilities within their families, and remaining in their own communities in Asia. I know that when she took on the Presidency in 2014 her commitment invigorated a new buoyant mood within the Council.

Doris has made a significant contribution to Warwick's philanthropic endeavours. She has been a constant supporter of fund raising initiatives since the University's outset, and an advocate at every opportunity. In the last decade she has been particularly supportive of the University's 50Forward Campaign to raise £50m by 2015 and which proved to be such a resounding success. The first major appeal for the campaign was to raise funds for the renovation of the Butterworth Hall. Doris agreed to Chair the appeal and worked tirelessly to assist in successfully raising over £1.5m. She hosted events, speaking publicly and with great passion about the significant value of the Arts Centre and in particular its Hall, this Hall. I am sure you will agree, it is a very attractive and delightful venue for our degree ceremony today.

It is also a direct consequence of her forethought and care that Warwick has become a significant beneficiary of the Elizabeth Creak Charitable Trust which was created following the death of her friend, Elizabeth, a member of the dairy farming Clyde Higgs



family. This has resulted in the funding of a Chair in Food Security, a PhD research studentship on bee health and the provision of Clyde Higgs scholarships to support students interested in pursuing a career in the agri-food sector.

I am absolutely delighted that Lady Butterworth is being recognised today. This University would be much the poorer (and not in just the financial sense) without her outstanding contributions.

Provost, in the name of the Chancellor, I present Lady Butterworth to accept the Benefactors' Medal.