

Oration for Dr Julie Maxton CBE,

To be Held on 20 July 2018, 3pm by Dr Jonathan Cave

Vice-Chancellor

This afternoon, I am delighted to introduce our honorary graduand, the Executive Director of the Royal Society, JULIE MAXTON.

Julie Maxton is a lawyer, an academic and an administrator. After completing her LLB at University College London, she trained as a barrister, and was called to the Bar at the Middle Temple in 1978. She then moved to New Zealand, where she combined a long and successful practice as a commercial barrister with an academic career.

Her legal practice focused particularly on cases before the Court of Appeal and the Privy Council. In 2001, she became a member of New Zealand's Legislation Advisory Committee. She was described by one of New Zealand's law lords as

‘one of the brightest stars in the New Zealand legal firmament’. In the UK in 2012, she was made a Master of the Bench of the Middle Temple.

Julie’s academic career began in 1978 in the Law School of the University of Canterbury at Christchurch. In 1985, she moved to the University of Auckland Law School and quickly moved up the academic ranks, becoming Auckland’s first female Professor of Law in 1993. Her PhD thesis, entitled *Contempt of Court*, was completed in 1990; it was followed by numerous scholarly articles on trusts, equity, commercial and property law. An enthusiastic and committed teacher, she received University’s inaugural Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1993. In 2000, she became Dean of Law – the University’s first female Dean – and completed terms as Dean of Graduate Studies and as Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

These administrative positions were the springboard for a new career in academic administration. In 2006, Julie was appointed Registrar of the University of Oxford, the first woman to hold the post since its creation 550 years ago. She arrived at a somewhat stressful time for the Oxford administration, when the implementation of two new computer systems was causing serious difficulties. Julie set out to make improve the efficiency and

transparency of administrative processes, for example by setting up new committee structures for budgeting. When she left Oxford after five years, Sir Peter North, former Principal of Jesus College Oxford, described her as ‘a model registrar’. From Oxford she moved to the Royal Society, becoming its Executive Director in 2011. She is the first woman in 350 years to hold the post at this, the UK’s national scientific academy, a Fellowship of some 1600 of the world’s most eminent scientists and the world’s oldest scientific academy in continuous existence. Julie took over as Executive Director at a time when the Royal Society had very publicly and successfully celebrated its 350th anniversary, and has been actively building on the momentum of that success. She recharges her batteries for this demanding role as she has done throughout her career; by running at least eight kilometres every morning before work – what she calls her ‘thinking time’.

Julie’s career reads like a litany of Female Firsts. She is an active supporter of women’s advancement to top jobs and an outstanding role model for women and men alike. Her ambition, she says, is to see the day when people don’t remark on women’s appointments ‘because they don’t remark on it when a man is getting a top job.’ She is an Honorary Fellow of University College Oxford, and a Board member of the Alan Turing Institute and the Faraday Institute. In

2017 she received a CBE for services to science, law and education. It is a privilege to honour her at Warwick today.

Vice-Chancellor, in the name of the Senate, I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, JULIE MAXTON.