

Oration for Benefactors' Medal
The 29 May 1961 Charitable Trust
To be held at 3pm on Tuesday 16 July 2019
by Doreen Foster

Chancellor

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.

We are here to award the Benefactors' medal. The medal is awarded to recognise the deep and enduring impact of the philanthropic support that the recipient has given to the University. The recipient is The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust, represented today by three of the Trustees, Andrew Jones, Elizabeth Rantzen and Paul Varney. I am delighted to welcome them to today's degree congregation.

Since the founding of the University The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust has supported Warwick every year in a remarkable act of generosity and belief to help us achieve our goals. Indeed, we believe that we are the only University in the UK to have been fortunate enough to retain a continuous relationship with a private philanthropic trust ever since the outset.

The trust was founded by Helen Martin, a local resident who had great foresight and a strong belief in the importance of a university in the area. Ms Martin made donations anonymously during her lifetime through the trust, but after her death, the trustees and university agreed to name the Helen Martin Studio at Warwick Arts Centre for her, to acknowledge the importance she placed on creativity and culture, and to express the university's gratitude for her support.

This support has come in two kinds. First, capital grants for significant new developments such as the 2020 project here at Warwick Arts Centre, the Modern Records Centre, Jack Martin Halls of Residence, the Tennis Centre and the Benefactors Residence. Secondly, funding on a triennial basis for areas of activity in which the trustees and the University have had a special interest.

The significance of the donations lies not only in the amount donated, but also the extent to which the gifts have provided leverage at critical strategic moments in the University's development, and also enabled us to establish and maintain activities of great importance to the overall life of the University and its surrounding community. It is certainly true that Warwick has undoubtedly been helped by the Trust to establish its distinctive reputation, and Warwick would not be the same institution without the Trust.

Warwick Arts Centre, so beloved by our staff, students and local community, and of which I am the Director, is one shining example of what has been accomplished. And what an example. It is a jewel within Warwick's glittering crown, and a jewel within this region, with a list of artists who have performed and exhibited here – from contemporary artists, dance and theatre companies, international orchestras to well-known comedians – that would be on every arts venue's wish list. At this point, I would like to add my personal thanks to those of the University to the Trust, to Helen Martin for her vision, and today's Trustees for their continued support.

We thank the current Trustees - Mr Vanni Treves, Mr Andrew Jones, Ms Elizabeth Rantzen and Mr Paul Varney - for their careful custodianship of Helen Martin's vision and celebrate extraordinary philanthropic investment in the development of Warwick that has had a transformational effect on the University, staff, students and the local community.

I am absolutely delighted that The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust is being recognised today. This University would be much the poorer (and not in just the financial sense) without its outstanding contributions.

CHANCELLOR, I PRESENT THE 29 MAY 1961 CHARITABLE TRUST THE
BENEFACTORS' MEDAL...

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