

Cindy Rose, OBE,

25 July 2022, awarded Honorary Doctor of Science (Hon DSc) with
oration given by Professor Caroline Meyer, Pro-Vice-Chancellor
(Research)

PROVOST

It is a great pleasure to introduce our honorary graduand this morning,
the President of Microsoft Western Europe: CINDY ROSE.

Cindy Rose has a degree in Political Science and Government from
Columbia University, and a Doctor of Law degree from New York
Law School. Her first job was with the Walt Disney Company which
she joined in 1990 (and which, she has confessed, included dressing
up as Pluto in the Disneyland Park in California!) She stayed with
Disney for 15 years, becoming Senior Vice-President and Managing
Director of the Disney Interactive Media Group. After four years with
Virgin Media as Executive Director of Digital Entertainment, in 2013
she became Managing Director of Vodafone's UK Consumer
Division, overseeing the company's expansion from 350 to over 500

stores, returning it to growth after 12 consecutive quarters of revenue decline. In November 2016, she took over as Microsoft UK's CEO, responsible for all Microsoft's product, service and support offerings across the UK and its continuing development in the mobile-first, cloud-first era. Fostering an inclusive and healthy culture, she built up a team that faced its ultimate challenge with Covid-19: they supported the NHS's deployment of Microsoft teams to 1.2 million healthcare workers, the Nightingale Hospitals with technical infrastructure, the manufacturing consortium producing ventilators, and schools across the UK with distance learning tools. In 2020, she was appointed President of Microsoft Western Europe, responsible for Microsoft's operations across 14 countries.

Cindy says that a common thread in all her jobs has been the power of technology to improve people's lives – a great enabler, shaping workplaces across industries. One of her overriding concerns has been the huge gap in digital skills in the UK workforce: she believes that technology companies have a responsibility to address this and that

UK industry must wake up to the need for digital transformation. She has enthusiastically supported Microsoft's apprenticeship programme, the provision of digital skills for civil servants and coding work for children: as CEO of Microsoft UK, she spent a lot of time with her industrial peers, MPs and educators 'hammering the message home.'

Cindy has been particularly concerned by the lack of representation of women in the UK tech industry – currently, only 26% of the workforce is female - an important untapped resource. 'The sooner we develop a strategy to empower young UK women in STEM,' she says, 'the better we can prepare for and shape the future' – a view which reflects the thinking behind our own outreach work here at Warwick. The answer is to get girls interested in STEM subjects at an early age: there is a five-year 'window of opportunity' to do this, from the age of 11 to 15, when research shows that girls' interest in STEM starts to wane. Cindy has taken a very proactive role here, personally supporting Microsoft's Digigirlz programme, which aims to encourage young women to pursue careers in STEM, and going to schools to talk to Year 8 and 9 girls about choosing careers in

technology – ‘that’s what I’m passionate about,’ she says. And, of course, she herself provides a most inspiring role model.

Cindy Rose recognises that the public is increasingly demanding ethical, unbiased and inclusive technology and believes it’s critical for organisations to meet these concerns head on. She stresses that if AI, in which Britain is a global leader, is to have a wholly positive effect on the world, organisations must develop ethical frameworks to manage it. In 2019, she was awarded an OBE for her services to British technology. We are delighted 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*, CINDY ROSE.

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