

Delroy Beverley, Hon DLitt

16 January 2023, pm

Chancellor

Our honorary graduand this afternoon is one of the UK's pre-eminent black business leaders and a tireless champion of inclusivity and diversity. I am delighted to introduce DELROY BEVERLEY.

Delroy had an early introduction to the world of work. At 14, he was up at 3.45 every morning to fit in a milk round before school. This, he says, taught him personal discipline, a basic knowledge of the service industries, and of finance. It also, perhaps, showed him the importance of setting one's sights high – among his peers, a milk round was considered infinitely superior to a paper round – and of the hard work needed to achieve one's aims: 'There is no escalator to the top,' he once said. 'You have to take the stairs.' His subsequent career has included many years working in social housing: he was Director of Property Solutions at Bradford-based InCommunities, one of the UK's largest social housing providers and, from 2017, Executive Director of Nottingham City Homes, an award-winning company managing some 27,5000 homes in Nottingham. In 2020, Delroy moved to his present position of Managing Director of York Teaching Hospital Facilities Management, where he has responsibility for all its private commercial business, with an annual turnover of some £110 million and over 1,200 employees.

Delroy's career has been accompanied by a swathe of important public appointments and awards – a formidable list, containing many 'firsts'. In 2014, he was appointed Chair of Bradford University

School of Management's International Advisory Board – the first BME Chair of an international business school. In 2015, he became the first person working in social housing to be named the Institute of Directors' Director of the Year. The following year, he was made a Companion of the Chartered Institute of Management, becoming the Chair of CMI's North East, Yorkshire & Humberside Board in 2020. He was appointed to the British Library Board in 2018, and from 2018 to 2021, held a non-executive role at Ofqual – its first male BME member. He became Regional Chair of the Institute of Directors for Yorkshire and the North-East in 2020 – the first person from a BME background in the organisation's 117 year history. In 2020, he became a Council member at the University of Huddersfield.

Delroy is also a high profile champion of diversity and inclusivity in business. He has been instrumental in encouraging BME people in business and in helping organisations recruit a more diverse range of people for this, he believes, is business critical. At InCommunities, for instance, he encouraged women and people from ethnic minorities into the construction industry via the company's apprenticeship scheme: his success was recognised by a Women in Science and Engineering diversity award in 2013. Delroy acknowledges the crucial importance of education as a positive force for change: the turning point in his own career came in 1999, when he was one of seven selected by Bradford council for a two-year pioneering executive leadership programme, and he has continued to boost his executive education through specialist leadership courses at Warwick, Oxford and Cambridge. He is also a strong advocate of mentoring, and as a mentor uses his own lived experience to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. He is a highly regarded public speaker and an active volunteer for Speakers for Schools – an organisation that reaches out to schools with students affected by area deprivation and disadvantage.

Delroy Beverley is a trailblazer, a catalyst for much needed change. His advocacy of inclusion and diversity and his belief in the transformative power of education are all reflected in our own mission here at Warwick. It is a particular pleasure to welcome him today.

Chancellor: in the name of the Senate, I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*, DELROY BEVERLEY.