Mr. Chancellor, John Edgar Webster's qualifications for an honorary degree include his fearlessness, his integrity, his eloquence, and his sense of justice.

The son of a shipyard front turner, born and brought up in Glasgow, he fought his way through the Battlefield Elementary School and Queen's Park Secondary School. At the age of fourteen he left school to become an editorial copy boy on the Glasgow Evening Times. Within him, the traditional Glaswegian toughness was joined with a driving ambition. At sixteen he had three newspaper jobs at once, worked fourteen hour days and weekends, and often covered the roughest crime beat of them all, the Gorbals in Glasgow, where the policemen go in threes.

In 1939, he exchanged one battlefield for another by joining the British Army, in which he served for six years. After that he saw what Dr. Samuel Johnson has called "the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees: the high road that leads him to England." Taking that road, he arrived in London to become the Chief Reporter for the tabloid, The Daily Graphic.

There's an even nobler prospect for a Scot: the high seas to North America. He sailed in 1947, with his wife and former childhood sweetheart, Margaret MacDonald. For six years he worked for The Vancouver Sun and then, in 1953, he broke with the Gutenberg Galaxy to sign on with the world of sound, joining CJOR radio. In 1963 he began his legendary career as a radio hot-liner. As Pierre Elliott Trudeau has said, "Jack has proved that you don't have to speak either of our official languages to be a success." That Glaswegian accent, untamed and un-shamed by thirty-five years in Canada, continues to roar through our living rooms today like a gale from the Hebrides.

As a hot-line host and investigative reporter, he opened the airwaves and aired grievances, injustices, and gross failings in our society, especially on behalf of those without power. His influence grew so that he became known as the scourge of the prevaricating politician and the bumbling bureaucrat alike. In 1978, planning retirement to his Salt Spring Island farm, he was tempted from pasture by an offer of his own hot-line show on BCTV. There at 9:00 a.m. "precisely", he takes on all comers, bringing politicians, entertainers, journalists, cranks and gentiuses into the homes, offices, businesses, hospitals, retirement homes, squad rooms and professors' dens all over the Province.

Dave Barrett has aptly summed up his contribution by saying: "In a sense, Jack Webster has helped make all British Columbia a community by serving as a sort of modern-day, electronically wired Socrates." Others have called him "the ruling lip," "the oatmeal savage," and "B.C.'s One True Folk Hero". But, loved or feared, he has been seen and heard, and has become a major force in this Province in formulating humane social policy and influencing decision-making from the grass-roots up to the cabinet room.

His contributions have been recognized. He has been twice named the Broadcaster of the Year and has received the Beaver Award for Excellence in Broadcasting, an award for heroism in negotiating the release of a hostage during the B.C. Penitentiary riots of 1963, and the Gordon Sinclair Award for outspoken opinions and integrity in broadcasting.

Simon Fraser University is pleased to have Jack Webster as a Distinguished Visitor to the University and to award him an honorary degree.

Mr. Chancellor, I now ask on behalf of the Senate of this University that you confer upon John Edgar Webster the title and degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.