HUBERT EVANS is known to Canadian writers as "the elder of the tribe", a tribute both to the man and to his work, carried out over a great many years, sometimes under conditions of adversity such as his near-blindness. Milton's poem, "On His Blindness", spoke of "that one talent which is death to hide". Hubert Evans, by will and by faith, has not hidden that talent but has continued to develop it. Some of his best work has been done in his later years. He has grown in wisdom, tough-mindedness, compassion and the saving grace of humour.

Born in Ontario in 1892, he is nonetheless a truly British Columbia person. As a young man, he and his wife Anna Winter settled in Roberts Creek. They later lived in northern B.C. for a time, and out of that experience came the novel, MIST ON THE RIVER, 1954, now rightly regarded as a Canadian classic. His first novel, THE NEW FRONT LINE, 1927, came out of his World War One experiences. He has written three novels, books for young people, a biography, many plays, serials and short stories, and three books of poetry. He has also been a union organizer, commercial fisherman, prospector and salmon hatchery superintendent.

Writing, however, has always been both his trade and his true vocation. His autobiographical novel, O TIME IN YOUR FLIGHT, 1979, is unique in our literature, in its re-creation of a past era seen through the eyes of a nine-year-old boy in 1899, the year the century turned. In his 80's, Hubert Evans began to write poetry, and he has now given us three books of poems filled with his love of the west coast and its people.

He has been a long-time and honourable writer, a partner in a long and loving marriage with his wife Anna, who died in 1960, a father, a grandfather, a great-grandfather, a builder of boats and of his own home in Roberts Creek. In a profound sense, he has been a builder all his life, a builder for life.

He has called himself "The Old Journeyman". The name expresses his view of his writing as his trade, and his sense of journeying, not as an observer only but as a deeply committed participant in our journey here on earth.

"Journeyman" also means "a qualified artisan who works for another". Hubert Evans is a Quaker, and his work has been illuminated by his faith, a fighting faith that struggles for social justice, a meditative faith that mourns suffering even as it jubilates life, a faith that recognizes laughter as a gift of God. He has worked for himself and his need to communicate, as all serious writers do, but in so doing he has worked for "another" — for his beloved family, for the people of his land, and for the holy spirit that has moved him and given him grace.

Mr. Chancellor, I present to you HUBERT REGINALD EVANS for the degree of Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa.