JOHN GUSTAV BENE

Mr. Chancellor, I present to you John Gustav Bene - a man who has served his community, country and the developing world with dignity, integrity and compassion. In an age marked by divisiveness, John Bene has distinguished himself by bridging the barriers separating the poor from the affluent, the developing nations from the developed, and the public institutions from private interests.

Born in Vienna, he graduated in engineering from Jozsef University in Budapest and studied Forest Operations in France, Germany and England. At twenty-five, he began a career that would make him a leading authority on forestry and land management.

John Bene immigrated to British Columbia in 1938 and in 1944 became founder, Director and President of what was to become Weldwood of Canada Ltd.

In 1968, John's achievements in business led to new national and international challenges, as Special Advisor on Forestry to the President of the Canadian International Development Agency, and then Director-General of the Special Advisors Branch. Later he served as Senior Advisor to the President of the International Development Research Centre in Ottawa. In his international work he pioneered and promoted the critical science of agroforestry, designing comprehensive land management policies to enhance the welfare of people in the tropics.

His travels through thirty-five developing nations, often with his beloved wife Nerina at his side, deepened his abiding and passionate conviction that the renewal of our forests and the preservation of our soils must be at the top of the global agenda.

John Bene's contributions to community service matched his dedication to international development. He brought to each diverse community task the thoroughness of the true professional and the dedication of the committed global citizen.

In the early 1980's, John served as Chief Federal Negotiator for the Nishga Indian Land Claim in British Columbia. One who took the opposite side of the issue said of John Bene's role in it, "It is very difficult arguing with nobility".

Despite a grave illness, John has continued to work each day, completing reports on global forest and soil problems. A recent gift from friends in international development perhaps comes closest in capturing the measure of the man. It is a painting of a towering, solitary tree in a British Columbia landscape. The strength that comes from convictions fully embraced; the character that evolves from a life well lived, and love well given and received; and the endurance of this man's legacy, could not be more powerfully portrayed.

Mr. Chancellor, for his service to British Columbia, Canada and the nations of the developing world, I take great pleasure in presenting John Gustav Bene for the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa.*