Mr. Chancellor, I present to you Dorothy Livesay, a Canadian poet of enduring consequence whose work is both prolific and brilliant. T.S. Eliot declared that "The great poet, in writing himself, writes his times." The song and dance of Dorothy Livesay's poetry fits this precept well: recording her passage in flashes of vision and memory, uncovering the root of melody within ordinary language, capturing it lovingly and placing it upon the page.

Born in Winnipeg of literary parents, Dorothy Livesay at age eighteen published her first poetry collection, Green Pitcher, which skillfully draws upon imagist influences. But with the events of the thirties and forties, her radical social conscience quickened and she turned the full power of her well-crafted verse to join in the political and literary ferment of the times. In her subsequent writings, the earlier social themes are rendered more personal, while never failing to speak forcefully for the cause of peace, the rights of workers, the persecuted and women's struggles for equality.

Her accomplishments are many and are not circumscribed by the written word alone. Dorothy Livesay is no stranger to the academic life, graduating from the University of Toronto with a Bachelor of Arts in 1931, from the Sorbonne with a Diploma d'Etudes Superieures in 1932, from the School of Social Work at the University of Toronto in 1934, and from the University of British Columbia with a Master's of Education in 1966. In the course of her employment as a social worker, high school teacher, journalist, UNESCO program specialist, university lecturer in English, and writer-in-residence, Dorothy Livesay has lived and worked in most of Canada's metropolitan centres and in Africa.

Nor is she a stranger to public honours. She has twice received the Governor General's Literary Award in Poetry and was given the Lorne Pierce Medal of the Royal Society of Canada in 1947. Her literary and intellectual contributions over six decades were recognized this year by an Order of Canada appointment. Setting public recognition aside, perhaps Dorothy Livesay's greatest honour resides in the private esteem in which she is held by the many young poets for whom it has been her passion to encourage in writing, self-knowledge and self-expression.

Stephen Spender, like Dorothy Livesay, elegantly marries word-craft and politics in his verse. He once wrote:

"I think continually of those who were truly great --
The names of those who in their lives fought for life,
Who wore their hearts at the fire's centre.

Mr. Chancellor, for her great gift to Canadian literature, and for wearing her heart at the fire's centre, it is my distinct pleasure on behalf of the Senate of this University, to present Dorothy Livesay for the Degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.