Many nurture a desire to be remembered for having made a difference; some are recognized for special achievements, but few combine the ability, dedication and drive to effect change. Madam Chancellor, it is a pleasure to present to you a member of this select group - Dr. Ray Parkinson. He is a man who has championed higher education as a personal mission, fostering excellence in the councils of learning.

Raised in ethnic North Winnipeg, Ray Parkinson became active in the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation at an early age before serving his country in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps and the Royal Canadian Air Force (Medical Services) during World War II. He then entered the University of British Columbia and was graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1950 followed by a Medical Doctorate in 1954, later specializing in Psychiatry at McGill University.

Complementing his distinguished medical career as a clinician, administrator, researcher, consultant and teacher, Dr. Parkinson’s political activism and keen social conscience prevailed through nearly 30 years of service. His 1966 election as a Member of the Legislative Assembly for the New Democratic Party in Vancouver Burrard offered a vantage point from which his commitment to health care and education could be exercised.

Appointed to Simon Fraser University’s Board of Governors in 1972, Ray Parkinson gave strong leadership and wise counsel for a term lasting nine years, the last five as Board Chairman. Recognizing his lifelong and dedicated support for higher education, in 1981 the Provincial Government sought his guidance on the Universities Council of British Columbia.

Dr. Parkinson remains indefatigable, finding time to serve his community as a Board member with the Discovery Foundation, as Chairman of the Vancouver Maritime Museum and as a Director of the Save Our Parkland Association. Albert Schweitzer said, "There is no higher religion than human service. To work for the common good is the greatest creed." Today we seek to honour one whose service to the public good has been exemplary. Madam Chancellor, in the name of the Senate of this University. I am pleased to present Dr. Ray Parkinson for the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.