It is my privilege, Madam Chancellor, to present Peter Gzowski, a man whose life’s work defines the struggle to know ourselves as Canadians. Broadcaster, editor and writer, his often controversial journalism gives fresh credence to John Milton’s words:

“Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making.”

Our drive to understand the elusive Canadian identity is stimulated by daily doses of Gzowski, now in his ninth season as host of CBC Radio’s Morningside. Audiences are challenged to argue, write and change opinions; stimulated to cast out indifference, overthrow ambivalence and acquire new insight.

Born and raised in Ontario, Peter Gzowski was schooled at Ridley College and the University of Toronto before settling on journalism as a vocation. His literary style was shaped by employment on newspapers in Timmins, Moose Jaw and Chatham, leading to notice by the national press. Hired by Maclean’s in 1958, he became Managing Editor four years later.

Peter Gzowski’s broadcasting career began in 1969, but it was as host from 1971 to 1974 of CBC Radio’s This Country in the Morning that he made the break from print journalism and developed his hallmark style against which all others are compared. Gzowski exudes personal warmth, eager curiosity, and a searching interest in his fellow Canadian, anchored by a voice described as the best loved in the country — every programme a radio snapshot of a day in the life of the nation.

Peter Gzowski acquired a public face when he turned to television, first in 1976 for two seasons as host of the late-night CBC-TV programme 90 Minutes Live, and again in 1985 with Gzowski and Co., a documentary format featuring prominent Canadians. The demanding schedule of the Morningside years began in 1982, but Peter’s legendary energy allows him to maintain his commitment to the written word: five more books have joined earlier best sellers since his signature programme began eight years ago; his personal campaign to raise four million dollars for community-based literacy programmes already has received half the pledges needed to meet his goal.

A seven-time ACTRA winner, Peter Gzowski was named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1986. He has been honoured by other Canadian universities and we join them today in recognizing his journalistic gifts and his service as guide to our country’s manifest nature. Madam Chancellor, in the name of the Senate of the University, I am pleased to present Peter Gzowski for the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.