Mr. Chancellor, Dr. Alfred Bader belongs to that select few whose life represents the perfect marriage of intellect and passion. A chemist, art collector and philanthropist, Alfred Bader has fashioned a life of innovation, achievement, cultivation and generosity from beginnings fraught with hardship, danger and injustice.

Born in Austria, he moved to England to escape Nazi persecution. In 1940, he was wrongfully deported as an enemy alien to Canada, where he was interned in a prisoner-of-war camp for two years. Such treatment might have discouraged many, but Alfred Bader was undaunted. After his release, he studied at Queen’s University, where he proved to be a brilliant student who, in three successive years, was awarded a B.Sc. in engineering chemistry, a B.A. in history, and an M.Sc. in chemistry. In 1950, he received his Ph.D. from Harvard University. Subsequently, he co-founded the Aldrich Chemical Company. When his company merged with Sigma to become Sigma-Aldrich, he took leadership and in the ensuing years until his retirement, he served as a member of the board of this billion-dollar enterprise.

From early boyhood, and all through the years of building a highly successful business, Alfred Bader’s love of fine art nurtured and sustained him. He devoted years of study to art, immersing himself in the history of 17th Century Dutch and Flemish painting, and later expanding his interests to include French, Italian, and German artists. Initially, his knowledge and appreciation of painting revealed itself in his company’s catalogue and in the journals of Sigma Chemicals, their covers graced with works from his private collections. In 1961 he opened Alfred Bader Fine Arts. Since then as collector, dealer, lecturer and curator, he has earned the admiration and respect of artists and art lovers around the world.

Chemistry and art have enhanced Alfred Bader’s life, and he in turn has enriched ours immeasurably. A kind and gracious philanthropist, he has established several awards in chemistry including the Alfred Bader Award for Organic Chemistry of the Canadian Society for Chemistry. To show his abiding affection for Queen’s University, he has endowed two chairs and sponsored several fellowships and awards at that institution. In 1994, he donated Herstmonceux Castle in Sussex to his alma mater. His generosity has also extended to other Canadian universities as well as numerous causes overseas.

Mr. Chancellor, the Senate of this University is pleased to honour this distinguished scientist, inventor, entrepreneur, art connoisseur, collector, and philanthropist and I ask that you now confer upon Dr. Alfred Bader the degree Doctor of Science, honoris causa.