Mr. Chancellor, Max Wyman once remarked that it is our responsibility to give courage, confidence and opportunity to our artists. For more than thirty years he has lived those words as an esteemed critic and champion of the arts. We honour him today for his dedication to the cultural life of this country and this province.

Born and educated in England, he came to Vancouver in 1967. Here, as arts critic, analyst, author, and senior arts writer for The Vancouver Sun, he inspired Canadian artists to strive for excellence. Through his finely chiselled reviews, each informed by a sensibility steeped in learning, he engaged his readers and helped them gain a deeper understanding of our culture.

Mr. Wyman writes with grace and wit about many of the arts, but it is dance that has been his great life-long passion, for in his own words, “No other art form speaks so directly about the ephemerality of life, or about the human instinct for that perfect moment.” His provocative essays on dance have been published in magazines and newspapers like The New York Times, Prague’s TanzAffiche and London’s Ballet News. And he gave eloquent expression to his life-long love of this art form in his book Dance Canada: An Illustrated History, which was named one of the 135 Great Canadian Books of the 20th century.

His involvement with the arts extends well beyond the printed page. An articulate and passionate advocate for Canadian culture, he has encouraged others to advance and elevate the standard of arts criticism in this country. Over the years, he has served on many local and national bodies including the Canada Council for the Arts. Indeed, his reputation for cogent debate of the central importance of the arts to society is such that he was asked to be a member of the Canadian delegation to the biennial General Conference of UNESCO.

In recognition of his unique contributions to Canadian society, he received the Queen’s 25th and 50th Jubilee Medals. In 2001 he was installed as an Officer of the Order of Canada. Perhaps the greatest accolades, however, are those that come from the artists whose work he has reviewed. Invariably, they speak of him with deep affection and respect.

Mr. Chancellor, we are fortunate to have Max Wyman in our midst. He has enriched our cultural life and deepened our appreciation for the arts. It is my privilege now to ask that you confer upon Max Wyman the degree Doctor of Letters, honoris causa.