Mr. Chancellor. in Dr. David Suzuki we find a unique marriage of reason and passion, scientist and activist, thinker and doer. Throughout his long and illustrious career, he has opened our eyes a little wider to the mystery, the wonder, the fragility—indeed, to the very nature of things. We honour him today for his achievements in science and for his eloquent defense of this wonderful planet.

Born in Vancouver in 1936, he attended university in the United States, earning his BA in biology at Amherst College and his PhD at the University of Chicago. As a professor of genetics at The University of British Columbia, he had a major influence on the careers of many young scientists, including several who are faculty at this University. His laboratory was an exciting place. The first isolation of temperature-sensitive lethal mutations was done there, work that proved to be a major tool in the analysis of Drosophila behaviour and development.

Fortunately for all of us, his influence has extended far beyond that laboratory. Few have done more to make us aware of humankind’s capacity to enrich the planet or to destroy it. As host of CBC’s The Nature of Things and the later series A Planet for the Taking, he has entered not only our living rooms but also our conscience. Always articulate, he has explained the link between bench science and the public, and focused our attention on the ethics of modern molecular and genetic research and the general degradation of the environment.

David Suzuki, lauded internationally for his work, has also been an eloquent spokesman in provincial issues, such as torpedo testing in NanOOSE Bay and logging in old growth forests. As chair of the David Suzuki Foundation he is involved in environmental issues of major concern to Canadians. A passionate advocate of education, he inspires young people to be involved.

Such achievement has been recognized with many prestigious honours. David Suzuki holds honorary degrees from thirteen universities here and abroad. He was the recipient of the E.W.R. Steacie Memorial Fellowship as the Outstanding Canadian Research Scientist under the age of thirty-five. He was also awarded the UNESCO Kalinga Prize for Science and the United Nations Environment Program Medal. He is an Officer of the Order of Canada, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and a Member of the Global 500 Honour Roll.

Mr. Chancellor, as scientist, writer, educator, and broadcaster, Dr. David Suzuki has worked to make this world a better, safer place for everyone. We are greatly indebted to him. In recognition of our appreciation for his contributions, I ask, on behalf of the Senate of this University, that you confer upon David Suzuki the degree Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.