Mr. Chancellor, it is my great pleasure to present Grace Mary McCarthy. We recognize today her lasting contribution to the people of British Columbia and Canada.

If it is true that our work is a portrait of ourselves, then Grace McCarthy’s portrait reflects a woman of integrity, wit, wisdom, tenacity, and compassion. A native of Vancouver, she has devoted her life to the betterment of B.C. As a business woman, as a municipal and provincial politician, and as a volunteer, Grace McCarthy has lived by the maxim: “Life grants nothing to us mortals without hard work.”

Her remarkable career as a politician began in the early 1960s with her election to the City of Vancouver’s Board of Parks and Public Recreation. First elected to the B.C. legislature in 1966, she entered Cabinet as Minister without Portfolio. In 1975, she was appointed Deputy Premier and named to two senior cabinet posts. During a period of 22 years, in several key portfolios and under four premiers, she established a reputation as a politician of principle and vision. Her list of accomplishments is long; their effects, profound.

Among Grace McCarthy’s many achievements several exemplify her foresight. She guided Vancouver’s development as the gateway to the Pacific Rim through the federal provincial Asia-Pacific Initiative. She was a driving force behind the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre, Expo ’86, and the lighting of Lion’s Gate Bridge. And it was Grace McCarthy who initiated the linear parkway under SkyTrain.

Her success in politics is mirrored in her life as a business woman and volunteer. As a young woman of seventeen, she opened a floral shop that eventually grew into a five-store retail chain. Along the way, she founded Canada’s first school of floral design and served as the first woman President of a Canadian Chamber of Commerce. Throughout all her years as an astute business woman and politician, Grace McCarthy gave, and continues to give, her time and advice to many non-profit groups. Indeed, her reputation as a volunteer is unparalleled. She has served on the boards of numerous organizations, and is currently President of the B.C. C.H.I.L.D. Foundation, which she co-founded after her retirement from politics.

Her commitment has not gone unnoticed. She has been honoured by Variety Clubs International, the International Association of Lions Clubs, the Vancouver Board of Trade, and many other associations. She was awarded the Government of Canada Silver Medal in 1982, and in 1993 she was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada.

Mr. Chancellor, in recognizing Grace McCarthy’s achievements today, we pay homage to a person whose dedication inspires us all. I am proud to present Grace Mary McCarthy for the degree Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.