Mr. Chancellor, it is my privilege to present Dr. Keith James Laidler, a distinguished Canadian chemist, educator, and author whose lifelong passion for knowledge gives fresh credence to Jacob Bronowski’s words: "The most wonderful discovery made by scientists is science itself."

A native of England, Keith Laidler earned his B.A., M.A., and D.Sc. at Oxford and his Ph.D. at Princeton University. He served as a Scientific Research Officer during World War II. Subsequently, he was appointed as a Professor at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. He joined the University of Ottawa in 1955 and served as the Chairman of the Chemistry Department from 1961 to 1966. He has been a Professor Emeritus of Chemistry since 1981.

Throughout his career, Keith Laidler has been a vital force in the science of chemistry in this country and internationally. An outstanding researcher, he is one of this century’s pioneers in chemical kinetics and has made seminal contributions to several areas of the field.

Following the tradition set by many brilliant scientists who have used their considerable skills to educate others, Keith Laidler has used his talents as a writer and teacher to communicate the beauty and mystery of his subject. He has authored some 250 research publications, and several acclaimed books on kinetics, enzyme processes, and texts on chemistry for university students. As a professor, he willingly assumed a heavy teaching load to ensure contact with undergraduate students. Over the course of his career, he also supervised 50 Ph.D. and five Masters candidates in his laboratory.

For his exceptional work, Keith Laidler has received many awards and distinctions. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. He delivered the prestigious Boomer Lectures at the University of Alberta in 1978. He was appointed a Welsh Foundation Lecturer in 1982, the same year that the Royal Society of Canada awarded him its Centenary Medal. In 1987, the Royal Society presented him with the Henry Marshall Tory Medal for outstanding research. In 1996, many years following retirement, Keith Laidler was honoured with the Dexter Award for Excellence in the History of Chemistry, attesting to his ongoing work in writing historical accounts of significant events in chemistry.

Mr. Chancellor, Keith Laidler has devoted his life to the pursuit of knowledge. In the process, he has touched the lives of many students and scholars and played a leadership role in placing this country on the world map of university recognition in chemistry. I am proud to present Dr. Keith J. Laidler for the degree Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.