Madam Chancellor, it is my distinct pleasure to present to you Liona Boyd, an individual whose musical artistry surmounts the boundaries of style and place. Her virtuosity illuminates the words of Lewis Thomas: "We are a spectacular, splendid manifestation of life. We have language . . . We have affection . . . And finally, and perhaps best of all, we have music." A universally renowned guitarist, Liona Boyd lends classical style to an eclectic repertoire that includes pop, jazz, Latin and soft rock. Her music celebrates the richness and beauty of life itself.

Born in Britain, she has called Canada her home since the age of six. Her musicianship, apparent from childhood, has been refined by private study with artists such as Julian Bream and Alirio Diaz. Refreshingly creative in her performance interpretations and original compositions, Ms. Boyd waives the criticism of traditionalists, pursuing her own musical directions and pleasing audiences from Greenland to Rio.

Early milestones in her career include a Carnegie Hall performance in 1975 and her orchestral debut in Toronto with the New Chamber Orchestra. Sixteen record albums followed, many now recognized as Gold or Platinum. Command performances before world leaders, international festivals, and concert appearances with symphonies on five continents add to the distinction gained as the first performer to play in the new Paris Opera House.

Four Juno Awards, three honorary degrees and the Order of Canada are further testimonials to Liona Boyd’s musical accomplishment. Her early mentor, Andres Segovia, predicted that Liona would have a magnificent career and events have justified his confidence: today the whole world lays claim to the musical charms of Canada’s First Lady of Guitar. This afternoon we are delighted to join in her praise with our tribute. Madam Chancellor, in the name of the Senate of this University, it is my privilege to present Liona Boyd for the Degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.