Madam Chancellor, it is my distinct pleasure to present to you a distinguished member of Simon Fraser University's Convocation: Professor Emeritus Maurice Halperin. Student, researcher, teacher, war-time intelligence agent and author, Professor Halperin stimulates intellectual curiosity in all whom he encounters. With wit and elegance, he has spent a lifetime examining conventional social and political ideas and promoting the diversity of opinion fundamental to higher learning and a free society.

If experience is the child of thought and thought the child of action, Professor Halperin's learned analysis of political affairs is grounded in his own extraordinary history. Educated at Harvard before taking his doctorate at the Sorbonne, he returned to the United States in 1931 and an academic post at the University of Oklahoma. Fluent in French, Russian and Spanish, he was attracted by Mexico's proximity, and began a systematic study that earned him national prominence and access to political inner circles. But prominence, combined with Dr. Halperin's commitment to civil rights advocacy, carried a price when an Oklahoma State Senate Committee foreshadowed future abuse by branding him subversive and recommending dismissal by the University's Regents.

As the Second World War's dark shadow spread over the United States, Professor Halperin's expertise was turned to the nation's service: first as Latin-American Division Chief with the Office of Strategic Services from 1942 until 1945, later with the Department of State from 1945 through 1946. It was during these years that Maurice Halperin played his part in the classic power struggle between FBI Chief J. Edgar Hoover and OSS Director William "Wild Bill" Donovan. Recognized as a leading American specialist on the communist world, he returned to academe as Department Head for Latin-American Regional Studies at Boston University, soon falling victim to the now infamous Senate investigation into communist influence led by Senator Joseph McCarthy.

Forced once again to move on, Professor Halperin began a 15-year odyssey that took him to the Universities of Mexico, Moscow and Havana. Pilloried at home while respected abroad, in 1952 he was awarded Brazil's highest civilian honour, The Order of the Southern Cross. Consulted by scholars around the world for his expertise on Cuba and Castro, critic of tyranny in all its form, renowned for intellectual vigour, Maurice Halperin now enjoys tribute across the political spectrum. One of Simon Fraser University's most learned and engaging lecturers, since 1981 he has contributed immeasurably to our scholarly dialogue and reputation. Madam Chancellor, in the name of the Senate of this University, I am pleased to present Professor Emeritus Maurice Halperin for the Degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.