It is with distinct pleasure, Madam Chancellor, that I present to you Thomas Simons, a private and modest man who gives to private enterprise a human face. In practice and in principle, he unites business ethics with success, turning corporate achievement to the service of an enlivened conscience. Emerson claimed that “The true test of civilization is the kind of man the country turns out”, and for all those intent on entering the corporate world, Thomas Simons presents a model well worth emulating.

Representing the third generation of managers in his family-owned engineering company, Thomas Simons began his career in 1954 after receiving a Bachelor of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering from Washington State College. President of H.A. Simons Ltd. since 1968, he has guided the company’s growth to fifteen offices on six continents. The firm is a leader in ecologically conscious engineering and an advocate for balanced industrial growth - qualities the Canadian federal government recognized with the presentation of two Canada Export Awards in 1986 and 1990, followed with a Canada Award for Business Excellence in 1986. The honour paid the company reflects on Thomas Simons himself, later to be personally honoured in 1989 with the Meritorious Achievement Award from the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia.

Director of the Vancouver Board of Trade since 1988 and a member of the British Columbia Institute of Technology Board of Governors since 1985, Thomas Simons brings the same strength of purpose and credibility to community service as he does when exercising his commercial responsibilities. In a supporting partnership with his wife, Jennifer, public interest provides the moving force behind the Simons Foundation, established with corporate philanthropy to encourage innovative programmes promoting fundamental change through education. Deeply concerned with peace and global security, the environment, women's issues and other issues of social justice, the Foundation also directs assistance to health and welfare, art and culture.

It has been said that modesty and unselfishness are virtues we first praise and then pass by. Today these virtues shall not go unrecognized. For his achievements in business, service to the community and support for education, it is my privilege, Madam Chancellor, on behalf of the Senate of this University, to present Thomas Simons for the Degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.