

GRADUATION 2013

Presentation speech for John Berc

of Parliament is not just a job; it requires a sense of vocation coupled with a high moral and ethical purpose.

When he became Speaker, John had to appeal to Labour and Lib Dem MPs as well as those in his own former party – Speakers must give up their party membership. During the early part of his time as Speaker, he faced something of a campaign by members of his old party who simply did not understand what the role of the Speaker entailed. It is much to John Bercow's credit that he has broken the historical and unsatisfactory Buggins turn system whereby each major party selected the Speaker in turn. Thus one of his greatest contributions to unwritten constitution is that he has championed the idea that the Speaker should be elected on the basis of cross party support. While this led initially to unpleasant personal attacks in the media, it is a tribute to his courage and stamina that he has withstood them so well. His reward is that they finally seem to be fading.

John Bercow has also been an enormous support to this University, regularly giving lectures – which have been of great help to our students of politics and international relations – and helping lobby on our behalf over important governme

risen in life, four roundels to express his love of tennis, and pink triangles to signify his support for gay rights.

Chancellor, John Bercow has been an exemplary MP and a paradigm-shifting Speaker of the House of Commons and I call upon you to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*.