

Keele University Awards Honorary Degrees – July 2009

Keele University will award Honorary Degrees during this summer's graduation ceremonies to a group of people who have made outstanding contributions within their fields of expertise. They have made a major impact with significant work over many years in the diplomatic service, molecular medicine, to the life of Staffordshire, to social work and disability services and to industry and the work of the University.

The University will award five honorary degrees at ceremonies on July 7th, 8th and 9th.

Honorary award recipients include **James Hawley**, the Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire, who will be awarded a Doctor of the University in recognition of his contribution to the County of Staffordshire.

James Hawley has been Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire since 1993. Born in 1937, he has lived in Staffordshire all his life. Educated at Uppingham and Oxford (MA in Law), he is a qualified Barrister but did not practice. He spent almost 40 years in the textile industry. He did his National Service in the South Staffordshire Regiment and then served for 12 years in the Staffordshire Yeomanry (TA). He has been a Magistrate for 40 years, was High Sheriff of Staffordshire 1976/7, Deputy Lieutenant 1978, a Tax Commissioner and a member of the Court of Keele University. He is Patron, President and Trustee of many organisations in Staffordshire. He was appointed a Knight of the Order of St John in 1993 and has honorary degrees from Keele and Staffordshire universities.

Dame Jo Williams, DBE, will receive a Doctor of Letters In recognition of her contribution to social work and disability services

Dame Jo Williams, DBE, a Commissioner with the Care Quality Commission, is the former Chief Executive of the Royal Mencap Society. She is also the former president of the Association of Directors of Social Services and champion for social care services throughout a career in local government. In 2000 her contribution to the work of social services was acknowledged by the awarding of the CBE.

Dame Jo is also Co-chair of the Learning Disability Coalition and a member of bodies advising government on the third sector, carers, learning disabilities and children's services.

Dame Jo joined Mencap as chief executive in 2003. Before joining Mencap she had spent over 30 years in local government, including 10 years as a Director of Social Services. In 2005, Community Care magazine named her as the most influential person in social care, and in 2007, she was awarded a D.B.E. in the Queen's New Year Honours list for services to people with learning disabilities. Dame Jo left Mencap in November 2008.

She has served on several government taskforces – she is an advocate for partnership working across different agencies and is passionate about involving service users. She is

a trustee of the EveryChild Board, Chair of the Research in Practice Partnership Board, a member of the National Learning Disability Taskforce, Chair of the Prison Reform Trust, Chair of the National Advisory Council in relation to Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) Services and co-chaired the Third Sector Taskforce with Ivan Lewis MP, Minister for Health.

Dame Jo, a graduate of Keele University, began her career in 1971 as a social worker at Shropshire County Council before moving to Cheshire County Council in 1973 where she spent 19 years in a variety of operational roles. In 1992, Dame Jo began five years as the director of social services at Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council, then moved on to the post of director of social services at Cheshire County Council.

Eric Hassall, CBE, FRICS, FIMMM, FGS, will receive a Doctor of the University in recognition of his contribution to industry and the work of the University.

Eric Ronald Hassall, CBE, DSc, CEng, FRICS, FIMM, FGS, made an immense contribution to Keele University over 13 years as a lay member of Council.

He was a Member of the University Council from 1995-2008, including Deputy Pro-Chancellor from 2003-2008, Chair of Strategic Planning Committee and Keele University Science and Business Park Limited. He served on Finance, Honorary Degrees, Nominations, Estates and Research Committees and also the Court, Council Approvals Group and the Board of Keele University Science and Business Park Limited.

He was Deputy Chairman of the Coal Authority from 1997 to 2000 and Chairman of the British Geographical Survey Board from 1994 to 2001. He was with the National Coal Board from 1947 until 1972, when he became a partner with Wardell Armstrong. He later became a senior partner in 1981 and was Chairman from 1991 until 1994. He was a Crown Agent from 1988 to 1992 and a member of NERC from 1993 to 1998.

David Cooney will receive a Doctor of the University in recognition of his contribution to diplomacy and public service.

David Cooney was appointed Secretary General of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Ireland this year. He was previously Ambassador to the Irish Embassy in London and prior to that headed Ireland's United Nation's mission in New York.

Born in London in 1954, he studied for a BA Hons (Politics and History) at Keele. He started his career as an Executive Officer with the Department of Agriculture in Dublin in 1976. David Cooney has 27 years experience in foreign affairs, having entered the Department of Foreign Affairs as a Third Secretary in 1979. As Counsellor and Head of the Political Section of the Anglo-Irish Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs he was closely involved in the negotiations which led to the Belfast Agreement of 1998.

He has also served as a Counsellor and European Correspondent in the Department. During his career at the Department of Foreign Affairs he has held posts in Vienna,

Brussels and Paris.

Professor Sir Alex Markham will receive a Doctor of Science in recognition of his contribution to molecular medicine

Professor Sir Alex Markham has made contributions to medical science in various fields. On the basis of his expertise in nucleic acid chemistry, he developed research programmes in molecular biology from the late '70s and was one of the pioneers of molecular genetics research in the UK in the 1980s. For the last 15 years in Leeds, his group has studied autosomal recessive Mendelian disorders in the highly consanguineous, immigrant communities of West Yorkshire, leading to an understanding of the genes mutated in a variety of neurodevelopmental and malignant diseases.

He is the Professor of Medicine at the University of Leeds and directed the Molecular Medicine Unit at St James's University Hospital.

He has undertaken a range of administrative duties at national level, including the chairmanship/membership of numerous committees for the Medical Research Council, the Department of Health, and the Wellcome Trust. A Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences and a newly-elected Board Director of the International Union against Cancer, he was, until recently, Chairman of the National Cancer Research Institute in the UK and remains on its Board.

He has been a member of the UK Clinical Research Collaboration Board and the National Institute of Health Research Advisory Board. He was a member of the Government's Cancer Reform Strategy Advisory Board and chaired its Clinical Outcomes Group. Professor Markham was Chief Executive of Cancer Research UK from 2003-2007.

He has been appointed to the MRC Strategy and Planning Group and the Government Office for Science panel, conducting a Science Review of the Department of Health. He serves on the Department of Health Ministerial Industry Strategy Group Advisory Panel and is Chairman of the Office for the Strategic Coordination of Health Research Translational Medicine Board. In 2007 he was appointed Chairman of the NHS Connecting for Health Research Capability Programme.

Professor Sir Alex Markham received a knighthood in the 2008 New Years Honours list for services to medicine.

For further information contact:

Chris Stone,
Keele University Press Office.
Tel: 01782 733375