

DR BERNARD MACMANUS

My Lady and Chancellor,

Dr Bernard MacManus was the first Vice-Chancellor of Bournemouth University, serving in that office until his retirement in 1994. Under his leadership the Dorset Institute grew significantly and achieved polytechnic status, which in turn enabled Bournemouth to become a University under the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992.

Bernard MacManus is a west-country man by birth. He took a University of London degree in Engineering, at Plymouth College of Technology; then, after a period of work in industry as a development engineer at the Central Electricity Generating Board, he became a Senior Research Associate at the University of Birmingham, where in 1969 he completed a PhD in mechanical engineering. His advancement through the ranks of academia was rapid, and a series of increasingly senior appointments in several polytechnics took him in 1978 to Glasgow College of Technology (now Caledonian University) as Deputy Director. Dr MacManus brought this wide experience and understanding of the polytechnic world to the Dorset Institute of Higher Education when he became its Director in 1983.

At that time the Dorset Institute was at a low point in its history. Its Weymouth Campus was about to close, along with the initial teacher training programmes based there. The loss of a campus, and a major academic discipline, could have been fatal blows, but the new Director brought fresh vision, and enormous drive and energy. His vision was based on the concept of vocational higher education (of which he was a pioneer) and focussed on new disciplines which addressed the needs of the national and local economies. Other, similar institutions developed vocational programmes, sometimes imitating innovations at the Dorset Institute, but lacked the coherence of vision, policy and development which Bernard MacManus single-mindedly pursued.

Within five years the impact was evident. Dr MacManus recalls colleagues 'knocking on his door and bringing fresh ideas', and in response he established new structures within which to cultivate new and original areas of study such as Heritage, Tourism, Tax, and Public Relations. He was ahead of his time in realising the potential of IT provision in higher education, and in developing a range of courses such as Computer Animation and Information Systems Management to meet the changing needs of industry. He also fostered the development of applied research by appointing readers and funding research assistantships. The former College of Nursing was integrated, forming the basis of the Institute of Health and Community Studies (now the School of Health and Social Care).

The widening of the curriculum and the growth of student numbers (doubling between 1984 and 1989, and doubling again by 1994) enabled Bernard MacManus to make a powerful case for designation as a polytechnic. This was a daunting task: no polytechnics had been created since the first wave of

designations in 1970; and government had neither procedures nor criteria for applications. It was necessary first to press government to establish the rules, and then to make the Dorset Institute's case. Dr MacManus's two-year campaign was crowned with success in 1990 when Bournemouth Polytechnic became a reality – the first designation of a new polytechnic in some 20 years.

It should be recalled that this landmark success was achieved in very challenging circumstances. When it was incorporated in 1988, the Dorset Institute did not enjoy the financial advantages of other similar institutions. However, Bernard MacManus had mitigated the funding handicaps by negotiating a position of quasi-independence from Dorset County Council, the local education authority, and so enabled the Institute to adapt readily to incorporation.

Other noteworthy developments during Dr MacManus's time as Director and Vice-Chancellor included the establishment of the University's estate in essentially its present form. He led the consolidation of the Talbot Campus, including the building of the Student Village and the Student Centre, with the outstanding support of the Talbot Village Trust, and the acquisitions which created a second campus at the Lansdowne. Generations of students will be grateful to him for facilitating the establishment of the Old Fire Station, one the UK's most successful student nightclubs.

As it looks forward to a bright future, Bournemouth University warmly acknowledges the vision, sense of purpose and commitment which Dr MacManus brought to this institution, and celebrates his leadership which brought a declining Institute of Higher Education to Polytechnic status, and thus placed it in a position to become a University in 1992.

My Lady and Chancellor, I have the honour to present Dr Bernard MacManus, and ask you to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Education.