

Pro-Chancellor,

Since her first graduation in 2001, Lucy has launched a career in Wheelchair Tennis which has seen her achieve two Paralympic Bronze Medals, over 25 singles and 55 doubles titles.

As a child, Lucy favoured sport over academic subjects; enjoying football and hockey as well as being a keen horse rider. While at school she began to follow her parents' passion and talent for badminton, representing the county at national tournaments. A change of schools in her teenage years helped her to find a new focus on learning and she went on to achieve a BSc in the Science and Management of Exercise and Health from the University of Surrey.

Immediately after completing her degree, Lucy took up a job in sales. With her first pay packet she indulged her longstanding love of motorcycles, by taking her test and buying a bike. Within 12 days of riding she was involved in an accident, which left her paralysed from the chest down. Lucy remembers the traumatic experience of attending her university graduation ceremony in a hospital wheelchair and back brace, and returning to the hospital later that day to hear that the damage to her spine would in fact be permanent.

During the process of buying her first wheelchair, Lucy met former Paralympian and London 2012 flag bearer Peter Norfolk, who encouraged her to try wheelchair tennis. Her previous badminton experience and strong hand-eye co-ordination made her a natural talent, although many thought her disability too profound to enable her to compete successfully on the world tour.

She has since represented Great Britain at three successive Paralympics, twice winning bronze in the women's doubles. Understandably, she counts winning the medal at her home games in London as her greatest achievement to date. Lucy's other tennis credits include becoming the first Britain to contest the wheelchair tennis events at all four major Grand Slams in the same year and obtaining her highest singles ranking to date of World No.5 in 2013.

Lucy is now an ambassador for Paralympic sport and regularly visits schools to raise awareness of opportunities for disabled athletes, break down prejudices and inspire young people. Her message to today's graduates is: "although you never know what life is going to throw at you, concentrate on becoming the very best version of yourself you can be."

Pro-Chancellor, I have the honour to present Lucy Shuker, and I ask you to confer upon her the degree of Doctor of Arts, *honoris causa*.