

ALAN FROST DL

My Lord and Chancellor,

Alan Frost has made a large contribution to the life and development of Bournemouth University, particularly as Chairman of the University Board from 2004 to 2010. He is a highly experienced former chief executive in the financial services sector with a reputation for successful change management. Since 2010 he has been a Deputy Lieutenant of Dorset, and is currently High Sheriff.

Alan is well known in Dorset, having lived and worked in Bournemouth for 23 years, but he was born in the East End of London and went from Stratford County Grammar School to Manchester University. His family background gave him a strong sense of thrift, a reluctance to promote anything he didn't believe in, and a powerful work ethic; indeed his motto is the imperative *operam da*: 'work hard'; 'pay attention'. At Manchester he read Mathematics and eventually decided to become an actuary because that profession was a meritocracy. He started with Pearl Insurance in London but soon moved to Australia, where a strong business drive and lack of class structure greatly impressed him because they contrasted sharply with the working environment of 1960s England and its prevailing philosophy of 'getting by'.

Returning to the London Stock Exchange, where his boss was simply called 'the Major', he soon escaped to London Manchester Insurance and began a series of increasingly senior appointments which took him to the heights of the financial services sector and the leadership of household-name companies. His outstanding record includes Managing Director of Abbey Life Assurance Company; Group Chief Executive of United Assurance Group; Deputy Chief Executive of the Royal London Group; Chairman of the Teachers' Building Society; and a non-executive director of Hamworthy plc, Invesco Pensions Ltd, and NFU Mutual Insurance.

The hallmark of Alan's professional career is a strong belief in teams as purpose-driven combinations of people. This he learned by working with Meredith Belbin, much of whose thinking about team roles and individual behaviours he absorbed and applied. Another key influence was John Garnett, the charismatic chief executive of the Industrial Society, with his slogan 'Make it happen' and his emphasis on empowering individuals within teams. Armed with these ideas and skills, Alan found great professional fulfilment and pleasure in transforming underperforming teams, empowering people, and altogether 'making a difference'.

Alan's professional acumen and success have been nationally recognised through Fellowships of the Institute of Actuaries and the Institute of Management. He is also a past Master of the Worshipful Company of Actuaries. He remains an informed critic of the contemporary insurance industry, as he reflects on changes in the financial services sector over the last 40 years, and an insurance world where so much cannot now be quantified actuarially.

At school Alan was an actor – he still recalls playing the demanding part of Edgar in *King Lear* as a high-spot of his life – and he has never lost his love of the stage. He is rightly described as a performer who has used his gifts to extraordinary effect at business events. Former colleagues at Sun Life recall a conference for his sales teams where he did a choreographed dance to make a point about apologising for poor investment performance. He has also been known to illustrate a motivational address by breaking off to play the piano. Indeed the theatre, and especially music, still play a large part in his life, and he has been Chairman of the highly acclaimed Dorset Opera since 2004.

Alan's deep commitment to Dorset, and his profile in the county, were honoured in 2010 by appointment as a Deputy Lieutenant. This year he is also High Sheriff. He takes great and justifiable pride in these highly distinguished roles, rich as they are in history and tradition, and is a strong supporter of local charities.

Alan Frost became a member of Bournemouth University's Board in 2001. As Chair from 2004 to 2010 he presided over the appointment of two Vice-Chancellors and a period of transformational change which greatly strengthened BU's national and international profile. As a former Visiting Fellow in the European Centre for Corporate Governance it was to be expected that, as Chair, Alan would expect continuous improvement of governance, and this, along with financial rigour, were constant emphases throughout his term of office. 'He understood the role of Chair perfectly', says a Board member, 'and he added great value to Board business and to the University as a whole'. Indeed he has been a highly effective champion and advocate of BU, raising its profile greatly in Dorset and the region, and supporting the BU Foundation Trust. His natural PR gifts, a generous spirit and a genuinely warm personality have made and sustained many friendships. Now today this University, which he has served so well, is glad to honour him and give him a place for life in the ranks of its graduates.

My Lord and Chancellor, I have the honour to present Alan Frost, and I ask you to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Business Administration, *honoris causa*.