

Pro-Chancellor,

Bill Merrington has served as an Anglican priest for more than 35 years, during which time he has written extensively on issues relating to bereavement, loss and pastoral care, and has supported countless families affected by grief. In 2007, Bill developed a multi-faith chaplaincy for students and staff at Bournemouth University and Arts University Bournemouth. Having moved on from the role in 2018, he is fondly remembered for his wisdom, care and guidance.

Bill grew up in the North East of England, and attended one of the country's very first comprehensive schools before becoming the first in his family to obtain a place at university. Having completed a degree in forensic science at Sheffield Hallam University, Bill worked in the pharmaceutical industry until a period of serious illness caused him to consider a new vocation. Motivated to provide care and support to others, he enrolled at Durham University to study theology. One of his first roles as an ordained minister was in the maternity ward of a large city hospital, where Bill worked alongside bereaved parents. Keen to understand more about how parents cope with the loss of a child, he began to undertake research leading to his first publication. He has since gained a PhD in understanding parental child loss in different cultures, and has obtained further qualifications in counselling, play therapy and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Throughout his career, Bill has sought to make the subject of loss more accessible to people of all ages. He reflects that his time working within the learning environment of Bournemouth University inspired him to explore new ideas and concepts, and he went on to publish six books in six years relating to the subject. Having moved from Bournemouth last year, Bill has served as a chaplain to lifers at a high-security prison, while continuing to work as a counsellor. In his spare time, he is a sculptor, artist and musician.

Pro-Chancellor, I have the honour to present Bill Merrington and I ask you to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Education, *honoris causa*.