

Pro-Chancellor,

Frank Bruno is arguably Britain's most famous boxer, having won 40 victories during his professional career, including the World Heavyweight Championship in 1995. Since retiring from boxing he has become a much-loved personality, and has recently used his experiences of mental health issues to raise awareness and campaign for change.

Frank grew up in Wandsworth, South London, as one of five children. He describes himself as "a bit of a handful" as a child and, following a disagreement with a teacher at his secondary school, he was transferred to a special school. Staff there helped him to understand the importance of channelling his considerable energy and physical strength, and Frank began boxing. On leaving school, Frank worked as a labourer on building sites while honing his skills as an amateur boxer.

After achieving a string of successes, Frank became the youngest ever Amateur Boxing Association Champion - a record which he still holds today. Having turned professional, he went on to become European Champion and the WBC World Heavyweight Champion. During his career Frank fought in some of the sport's biggest ever contests, including two high-profile fights against Mike Tyson. He has been awarded an MBE for services to boxing, the BBC's Sports Personality of the Year Award and multiple lifetime achievement awards.

On retiring from boxing in 1996, Frank had already built a following as an entertainer. He followed advice received early in his career to prepare for life after boxing, and used his natural wit and charm to appear on Royal Variety Shows, television adverts and chat shows, and even starred as Shakespeare's Juliet in a Comic Relief sketch with Lenny Henry.

In 2003 Frank was diagnosed with bipolar disorder following a breakdown which led to him being taken into hospital. He has since used his experiences, and his considerable public profile, to help break taboos around mental illness. He has contributed to media interviews, featured in television documentaries and visited organisations, including Bournemouth University, to reduce stigma and campaign for better treatment. In 2014 he launched the Frank Bruno Foundation, to provide non-contact boxing programmes for young people and adults dealing with mental health difficulties.

Pro-Chancellor, I have the honour to present Frank Bruno, and I ask you to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Arts, *honoris causa*.