



**Bournemouth
University**

THE RT HON THE LORD NEUBERGER OF ABBOTSBURY

My Lord and Chancellor,

Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury is Master of the Rolls. As President of the Civil Division of the Court of Appeal and Head of Civil Justice he holds the second most senior office in the judiciary of England and Wales. Previously he was a Lord of Appeal and, before that, a High Court Judge and then a member of the Court of Appeal. He is also a Privy Councillor.

Lord Neuberger's father was Professor Albert Neuberger, Professor of Chemical Pathology at the University of London, and all of his three brothers hold professorial chairs. Initially he read Chemistry at Oxford, but during his final-year research studies he realised that a lifetime in science was not for him. He tried merchant banking, but after three years at N M Rothschild he was looking for a fresh start, and a well-timed conversation with a barrister friend encouraged him to read for the Bar.

So began a legal career of very great distinction. Lord Neuberger was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1974, and was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1987. He was a Recorder from 1990 to 1996, when he became a High Court Judge in the Chancery Division and received a knighthood. In 2001, he was made Supervisory Chancery Judge of Midland, Wales and Chester, and of the Western Circuits, a post he held until 2004 when he was appointed a Lord Justice of Appeal and a Privy Councillor. His unusually rapid elevation to the Court of Appeal in 2007, and to the House of Lords in the same year, made him the youngest Law Lord at that time.

Then, only two years later, in 2009 Lord Neuberger was appointed Master of the Rolls. The Master is the second most senior judge in England and Wales and Head of Civil Justice. Indeed he is both a judge and an administrator: so, for example, he chairs the Civil Justice Council which oversees the civil justice system and its effectiveness. And although the rolls of which he is Master are the Rolls of the Court of Chancery which ceased to exist separately when the High Court was created in 1875, Lord Neuberger has responsibility for the National Archives and thus influences government policy in matters such as the length of time during which records should be kept secret.

During his time in high office Lord Neuberger has made headlines in a number of high-profile cases, many of which reflect his concern to protect freedom of speech and promote the health and balance of public life. In the Court of Appeal in 2004 he took what was described as 'an impassioned and minority stance' when he ruled that the

Home Secretary should not use evidence obtained by torture in deciding to detain suspected terrorists. Earlier this year, also in the Court of Appeal, he gave judgment in favour of the journalist Simon Singh in a libel case about the efficacy of chiropractic, saying that 'scientific controversies must be settled by the methods of science rather than by . . . litigation'. Recently he appointed a committee to examine the use of injunctions to limit the freedom of the press.

In the legal profession Lord Neuberger is greatly esteemed as a jurist of the highest distinction who expresses his judgments with great clarity and lucidity. Many writers have referred to his approachability, humility, warmth and humour. He distinctively combines gravitas and erudition with what the Guardian has called a 'refreshing lack of pomposity': thus on one occasion he paraphrased Woody Allen: 'I'm not afraid of changing my judgments – I just don't want to be there when I do'. Hardly surprising, then, to see him described as 'the human face of the law'.

Academics and students value Lord Neuberger's close interest in the education of lawyers, and indeed Bournemouth University was first honoured by his presence in 2001 when he gave the Steele Raymond Lecture in his specialist area of property law, asking 'Can a lease be repudiated?' But he is also actively involved in higher education more generally, particularly as a Governor of the University of the Arts London.

Lord Neuberger has made numerous other contributions to national life. After leading a Bar Council investigation into widening access to the Bar, in 2006-07, he went on to serve as a member of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions. He is Chairman of the Schizophrenia Trust, which supports research projects in that field of mental illness. He has a great love for this county of Dorset – so much so that he took his title from Abbotsbury, where for many years he has made a home.

My Lord and Chancellor, I have the honour to present Lord Neuberger, and I ask you to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.