

DR PETER BARNWELL

My Lord and Chancellor,

Dr Peter Barnwell is a scientist and engineer who has founded and developed a number of innovative electronics companies, which had a wide impact in this country and in the United States. He has a remarkable track record of starting technology businesses, leading them to success and then selling them in order to start the cycle over again. His business activities inevitably took him into the world of venture capital, where he has also made a mark as a board member of two UK publicly quoted venture capital funds.

We can mention two examples of companies which Peter has founded and led: Corintech, which is locally based in Fordingbridge and designs and makes wireless data loggers and other electronics products; and Custom Interconnect Ltd, which has won awards for manufacturing advanced electronic systems for the defence, security, medical and communications industries.

In addition to his success in industry and finance, Peter has also enjoyed a successful parallel career as an academic. Beginning as a young lecturer in Electronics at Brighton Polytechnic (now Brighton University), he went on to build a research team, constantly looking for and developing synergies between science, technology and business. This approach became a consistent theme of his working life, taking him out of the academy and into industry, and then back into higher education, where he held in turn three professorial posts and served as a senior manager, first as Head of Electronics at Kingston Polytechnic (now Kingston University London) and later as Dean of his Faculty.

A significant part of Peter's varied working life, in the electronics and venture capital worlds, has been spent in the USA, and he is very much at home with the American 'can do' approach to life and work. Significantly, his heroes and role models are Isambard Kingdom Brunel, and the late Steve Jobs who – as Peter puts it – was 'thrown out of a company he created and then came back to turn it into the leading technology company in the world'. The choice of these role models reveals much about Peter's own approach to professional life and work, as a leading exponent of enterprise and entrepreneurship. His gifts and reputation were recognised nationally when he was appointed as a Member of the Order of the British Empire in 1983, and by his professional peers when he was elected President of the US-based International Microelectronics and Packaging Society. By way of contrast, he is very active at director level in a number of charities covering areas such as hospices, and care for the elderly and isolated. In a similar vein, his publications include work on intelligent text readers for the blind.

Peter's extensive professional experience has been of great value to our School of Design, Engineering and Computing and to BU more generally, first as an external examiner for the BSc Engineering Business Development programme, and latterly as a much-valued and highly influential member of

the University Board from 2005-13. In this capacity his wide industrial and commercial experience greatly helped the development of the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange strategy.

My Lord and Chancellor, I have the honour to present Dr Peter Barnwell, and I ask you to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*.