



Royal Holloway, University of London
22 May 2014

Citation for Professor Caroline Barron

Chairman of Council, it is my privilege to present to you Professor Caroline Barron.

Caroline Barron, a member of Bedford College and then of Royal Holloway and Bedford for over thirty-eight years, is one of the outstanding British medieval historians of her generation and also one of the most generous and supportive – an enthusiastic member of many voluntary organisations and, more specifically, a positive and articulate advocate of the identity of Bedford College, both at the time of the inauguration of the new institution and ever since.

Born in London into an Anglo-American family with a long tradition of literary and cosmopolitan interests, Caroline was educated at North London Collegiate School and Somerville College, Oxford, before moving to Westfield College in the University of London to undertake her postgraduate work under the supervision of Professor May McKisack. In 1967 she was appointed a lecturer at Bedford College, and it was at Bedford and then latterly at Royal Holloway and Bedford, that she was to spend the whole of her teaching career, until her retirement nine years ago. In the field which she has made so very much her own, the history of medieval London, her contribution has been so outstanding that her name has become virtually synonymous with the subject itself. In a large corpus of books, pamphlets and articles she has offered us fresh and original ways of looking at her subject. Rejecting older interpretations which saw London's history principally in terms of constitutional struggle, Caroline chooses to stress instead the role of faction and personality, bringing to life such colourful figures as Ralph Holland and Dick Whittington – the real Dick Whittington - and highlighting the concerns of the lesser people of the city, not least the women, whose lives she has helped rescue from the margins of historical study.

In addition to her corpus of published work, Caroline has helped influence her subject through her dedicated and inspiring teaching. As a supervisor of research students she has an outstanding record, having, in the course of her career, nurtured nearly two dozen research postgraduates, many of them now university teachers themselves, and all of them conscious of being part of Caroline's extended family. Caroline's research seminar on Medieval and Tudor London at the Institute of Historical Research, which she first established in 1975, is one of the most successful convened under the Institute's umbrella and has now met on over 300 occasions and has heard some 400 papers. Caroline's outstanding record in postgraduate supervision was recognised in 2008 in the presentation to her of a celebratory festschrift, *London and the Kingdom*, to which no fewer than 26 of her friends, colleagues and former students contributed.

Alongside her work in supervising research students should be set her pioneering contribution to the development of taught postgraduate degrees. Long before taught Master's programmes became the predominant way of both recruiting prospective researchers and of preparing them for their work, Caroline was herself developing such a programme, the College's MA in Later Medieval Studies, still one of the country's leading courses in its field. It was characteristic of her vision and foresight that from the outset she insisted on the programme being inter-disciplinary, drawing in teachers not only from History but from other Arts departments and, outside the College, in an early example of an institutional partnership, from the Museum of London.

The warmth and generosity which are so characteristic of Caroline's personality, and the sheer energy which she brings to everything that she does, have found expression in her sense of good citizenship. Outside the College she has served in a variety of capacities, most notably as chairman of the Friends of The National Archives and as a councillor of the London Record Society. The long interest which she has shown in the cause of women's education has led to her active involvement in the Hilda Martindale Trust and the Girls Public Day School Trust. Within the College, she was a member of the Academic Board at Bedford in the 1980s and subsequently Dean of the Arts Faculty there; and in 1999, she was heavily involved in the Sesquicentenary Celebrations for the foundation of Bedford College in 1849. A decade later, she was a leading force in the establishment of the Bedford Society, the launch event of which she helped organise and which was attended by some 350 Bedford alumnae and alumni.

More recently, in a mark of the high esteem in which she is held by all Bedfordians she was elected to the Chair of that Society. In all her voluntary commitments Caroline enjoyed the full and unstinting support of her late husband John, whom she married in 1962, and who was himself a highly distinguished academic, serving from 1991 to 2003 as Master of St Peter's College, Oxford, with whom Caroline was to establish a long and highly successful professional academic partnership.

In recognition of her outstanding contribution to the discipline of History and of her keen stewardship of the heritage and continuing identity of Bedford College, may I invite you, Chairman of Council, to induct as an Honorary Fellow of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, Professor Caroline Barron.

Professor Nigel Saul
Department of History
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