



**Royal Holloway, University of London**  
**15 May 2013**

**Citation for Professor Michael Eysenck**

Chairman of Council, it is my privilege to present to you Professor Michael Eysenck.

The reasons for this honour include his influential academic contributions to our understanding of personality, cognition, and emotion; his impact on the success of the discipline of Psychology through his best-selling textbooks; and his outstanding service over 22 years in the Department of Psychology at Royal Holloway, University of London, including 18 years as Head of Department.

Mike Eysenck was born in London in 1944, the son of renowned British psychologist, Hans Eysenck. In 1965, he was awarded a BA in Psychology with First Class Honours from University College London and was then recruited as University Lecturer by Birkbeck College. There, he completed his PhD studies in 1973, with a thesis titled "*Conditions modifying memory: The von Restorff and the 'release' effects*", then went on to earn the title of Reader in Psychology at Birkbeck in 1981. He was appointed Professor of Psychology and Head of Department at Royal Holloway, University of London in 1987, where he stayed for 22 years. He is currently Emeritus Professor at Royal Holloway and Professorial Fellow at Roehampton University.

Mike has published over 125 research articles and is one of the UK's most highly cited psychologists, with over 6000 citations. His most influential work is described in two ground-breaking theoretical papers (the first published in 1992, and the second in 2007), in which he proposed a detailed account of the relationship between anxiety and cognitive performance. This work continues to drive new thinking in the field. For his contributions, Mike was awarded the Lifetime Career Award from the Stress and Anxiety Research Society in 2009.

In addition to his influential research contributions, Mike has written over 40 books, including some of the most widely used texts for undergraduate and A-level teaching. These books are praised for their elegance and clarity, and for their success in conveying difficult material in an engaging manner. His book "*Cognitive Psychology*", now in its 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, has touched a huge proportion of undergraduate students studying Psychology in the UK, and is among the top 3600 books being sold on Amazon.co.uk! If you think that "top 3600" doesn't sound that impressive, remember that this 760-page tome on Cognitive Psychology is competing against Jamie Oliver, Dan Brown, and EL James. I think that in reflecting on his own career, Mike would be particularly satisfied with the contribution he has made to the growth and success of the whole discipline of Psychology through his A-level texts, which have inspired thousands of talented and curious students to pursue Psychology in their undergraduate training.

Perhaps most importantly, we recognize Michael Eysenck tonight for his incredible contribution to the Psychology Department at Royal Holloway. Mike came to Royal Holloway as Head of Department 2 years after the merger with Bedford College. Psychology did not previously exist at Royal Holloway, and so the entire Department had been transplanted from London to Egham. It was traumatic time for staff, and colleagues from that period remember with gratitude Mike's calmness, genuine kindness, and strong support for all staff.

Mike also deserves substantial credit for setting the foundations for a world-leading research department. In his history of Royal Holloway "*Struggle and Achievement*", former Vice-Principal Dr John Prebble describes the original Psychology Department as having strong devotion to teaching, but with little research activity. Indeed, in the first national assessment of research quality in 1986, the Psychology Department was awarded the lowest score possible of "below average". The assessment in 1989 was marginally better, with a score of 3 out of 5, indicating national excellence. In the 15 years of Mike's headship to follow, we went to a score of 5, indicating international excellence. The Department is now rated as the 7<sup>th</sup> best in the country for research.

But it wasn't all work. One of Mike's great mottos – for him and for his staff – was work hard, play hard. Everyone who knew Mike will remember him clad in his tennis gear, off to play on a sunny, summer's day.

In fact, there seems to be a collective memory (perhaps an urban myth) of the Principal at the time looking out of the window of the Large Board Room during a meeting of the Academic Board (for which Mike had sent apologies), and wondering aloud what Mike was doing on the tennis court. But while Mike in the Department was calm and supportive, Mike on the tennis court was another character indeed. More than one colleague summed it up in two words: "No Mercy".

In recognition, therefore, of his outstanding contributions to the discipline of Psychology, and to development of the Psychology Department at this institution, may I invite you, Chairman of Council, to induct as an Honorary Fellow of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, Professor Michael Eysenck.

Professor Kathy Rastle  
Department of Psychology  
15 May 2013