



Royal Holloway, University of London
14 May 2015

Citation for Professor Mary Fowler

Chairman of Council, it is my privilege to present to you Professor Mary Fowler.

Since 2012 Mary has held the position of Master of Darwin College, University of Cambridge, but for 20 years – she was our colleague here at Royal Holloway. It is for her eminent contribution to our College as well as to the international geological community that we honour Mary tonight.

Mary provides us with an example of what can be achieved by women in science – she is a role model for young women starting out as well as those in mid-career. In a College of the University of London that has its roots in women's education it is particularly appropriate to celebrate Mary Fowler's achievements. These achievements span research, teaching, academic leadership and are too numerous to mention in detail.

Clearly gifted from the start of her university career as a student, Mary took a First-Class degree in Mathematics at Girton College before moving to her present college, Darwin, where she undertook her PhD studies in Geophysics. She moved to a Royal Society European Exchange Fellowship at the ETH Zurich before turning her attention, for a little while, to her family (and thus the next generation of scientists).

Between 1978 and 1992, when her children were young, Mary's contributions to science were made through her honorary associations with the University of Saskatchewan and the Bullard Laboratory in Cambridge. In 1992 she was appointed to a fractional lectureship here at Royal Holloway. By 2002 Mary was Head of Earth Sciences (then Geology); she was recognised as a Professor in 2003, became Deputy Dean (Science) in 2009 and, in 2011, Dean of Science.

Sadly, for Royal Holloway, but providing suitable recognition of her eminence, in 2012 Mary was tempted back to Cambridge to her current position of Master of Darwin College and her career has gone full circle.

Whilst notionally working part-time for a large portion of her career Mary built a significant publication record which included her book, ***The Solid Earth: An Introduction to Global Geophysics***, now in its 3rd edition. This acclaimed text demonstrates Mary's clarity of thought. Her achievements were recognised in 1996 by the award of the Prestwich Medal of the Geological Society, given for major contributions to Earth Science. The citation notes ***The Solid Earth*** is recognised by her peers as a 'monumental achievement'.

Mary has also contributed to her wider academic community providing service to NERC, Leverhulme, RAE and REF panels and to the Councils of the Geological Society and the Royal Astronomical Society. She has also served in a number of editorial roles.

More parochially, perhaps I might recount Mary's achievement in transforming the financial fortunes of the Department of Geology, as it was then. Joanne Wright, the then Dean of History and Social Sciences, was witnessed as saying that if Mary could sort out a growing deficit, then she, Joanne, would eat her hat. Well not long later Joanne did just that – although to be fair she did cheat when she baked a cake, decorated it as a hat, and shared it with Mary over what I suspect was a big glass of wine!

Before closing I wish to answer a final question - who *is* this paragon of academic virtue? Well, simply, Mary is a talented hard-working woman who gives her all and more. She is at the heart of a distinguished academic family and has provided an example of how it is possible to contribute to the academic community at the same time as raising a family. Your family must be so proud of you Mary - would that your great grandfather Lord Rutherford were also here today to recognise your achievements with us. There is much talk about the difficulties facing women scientists who also have family commitments. Mary provides a role model that shows the possibilities. For all that I admire her academic achievements, I respect Mary most for her courage to put others first and still succeed on her own terms as an eminent scientist.

In recognition, therefore, of her contributions to our College and to the academic community of Geophysics, may I invite you, Chairman of Council, to induct as an Honorary Fellow of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College Professor Mary Fowler.

Professor Jane Broadbent
School of Management
14 May 2015