

CITATION DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR GERARD SUTTON, VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG, ON THE OCCASION OF THE AWARD OF A DOCTOR OF SCIENCE, HONORIS CAUSA, TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCESS CHULABHORN MAHIDOL ON 16 DECEMBER 1999.

Chancellor, it is a great honour to present to you Professor Dr Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn Mahidol.

Born into the Thai Royal Family in 1957, Her Royal Highness, Princess Chulabhorn has committed herself to a vision and a life work that reaches far beyond a ceremonial role. She has used a remarkable combination of keen intelligence, ability and drive to organise scientific knowledge and innovation to benefit not only the Thai people but also a wider world community.

Jacob Bronowski, acclaimed scientist and commentator, wrote over 20 years ago that a scientist “does not make policy; he does not even help to make it, and most of the time he has no idea what shifts of policy his advice is meant to serve”. His comments would still hold true today for many scientists but not for Her Royal Highness. Firstly, his reference to the scientist as “he”: the Princess, like many of our own science graduates, is a woman of science. Secondly, Her Royal Highness is a person of influence, someone who can affect policy and change and who has done so with integrity and for the good of others.

Princess Chulabhorn gained a Bachelor of Science degree with First Class Honours in 1979 from Kasetsart University and a PhD in Organic Chemistry in 1985 from Mahidol University. She was a prize winner during her studies at these two eminent universities. She undertook postdoctoral studies in Germany in 1987 and has since been a Visiting Fellow and Professor at universities in Germany, Japan and the United States. In 1986 she became an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry, London and was awarded the Einstein Gold Medal by UNESCO. Her Royal Highness has also published articles in international scientific journals, especially in the field of the chemistry of natural products.

Her Royal Highness has thus an enviable record of academic achievement but she chose to meet a challenge beyond the confines of a laboratory; to marshal the scientific resources in her country for the benefit of her people. In 1987, Princess Chulabhorn gave shape to her vision when she established the Chulabhorn Research Institute [CRI] to provide an environment for scientists to work for the benefit of Thailand.

The Institute brings together intellectual and other resources and focuses them on solving the urgent problems confronting the country in areas such as health, environment and agriculture. The Princess is the Director of five special projects at the Institute: the AIDS program, the program on restoration and integrated development of the flood affected area in southern Thailand, saltwater irrigation for cultivation of economic marine species and preservation of mangrove forest, the rabies eradication program and a special project for accelerated immunisation in five southern provinces in Thailand. Through such programs, she has been instrumental in improving the living standard and environment of her people, particularly the villagers in the provinces along the Thai/Cambodian border.

The Institute and Princess Chulabhorn's achievements and skills are not only of great benefit to Thailand but to other countries. The United Nations Environment Program

[UNEP] appointed her as Director of its Centre of Excellence for Environmental and Industrial Toxicology. She also attended the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro as the leader of the Thai delegation and has been an Ambassador of Goodwill of the World Health Organisation. She is, to this day, still patron of the International Foundation for Sciences in Sweden.

As a scientist, Princess Chulabhorn knows that science is universal and that to succeed the work of the Institute has to be of international standard. She has travelled overseas to the centres of advanced science and technology to study the management/administration of research institutes, share the results of her work, exchange knowledge, and seek cooperation from governments and institutions.

We are thankful that Her Royal Highness was able to include her visit today in her demanding itinerary. Her presence not only holds up to our University community a model of a fine scientist and humanitarian, it also allows us to acknowledge our own contacts with her country. The University of Wollongong also has one of the highest Thai student enrolments in Australia. The University has Agreements of Educational Cooperation and a number of active areas of exchange and research cooperation with Thai universities. We are pleased to have this special opportunity to celebrate our relationship with Thailand as we acknowledge one of the country's most outstanding leaders.

For today Chancellor, we honour an extraordinary woman and a great leader of her people. Her Royal Highness has led by her example of tenacity, vision and a deep commitment to humanity. To her fellow scientists, she shows how the resources of the most traditional sciences can be applied vigorously to real life problems without loss of integrity and with demonstrable benefit to the environment. To her people, she has given hope by redirecting their energies towards projects that bring life and fulfilment. To other countries, she has an important message about environmental responsibility and the proper use of resources. She performed all of these roles with a special elegance and strength of mind and presence.

To return, in closing, to Bronowski. He observed in the 1970s that “the public everywhere is looking to scientists to find a practical way to express the sense of international duty and decency”. He could find then “ no guarantee that scientists will make a better job of fitting science to humanity than has been done so far, but it is time that they faced their moral obligations and tried”. Chancellor, in Her Royal Highness we have found a scientist who, at the latter end of the millennium, has faced these obligations and fitted science to the service of people and the world they live in.

Chancellor, it is my great privilege and pleasure to present to you Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn for the award of Doctor of Science, honoris causa.