



## **SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY**

### **Honorary Degree Citations The degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*, conferred on Dr. Marco A. Marra Friday, June 4, 2004**

Mr. Chancellor, it is with great pleasure that I present Dr. Marco Marra. One of this University's most accomplished graduates, Marco Marra is a truly original thinker whose research has made him a leading expert in the field of genomics.

After completing his PhD at Simon Fraser University, Marco accepted a post-doctoral appointment at Washington University, where he immersed himself in groundbreaking research, focusing on the complete analysis of the human genome. His talents quickly recognized, he was appointed group leader of two research teams. While there, he developed the mapping methodology that became one of the keys in documenting the human genome.

Dr. Marra could easily have remained in the United States and taken any one of a number of prestigious positions. Instead, at the invitation of Nobel Prize Laureate Dr. Michael Smith and to our good fortune, he returned to his native province to become Associate Director of the Genome Sciences Centre with the BC Cancer Agency. Today as its Director, he is internationally renowned for his involvement in mapping more than fifty percent of the code of the human gene. An exemplary scientist and role model, Dr. Marra attracts many young, gifted researchers to the Centre, ensuring that we will remain in the forefront of this revolutionary field of scientific inquiry.

In 2003, Dr. Marra used his outstanding gifts as a researcher and team leader to confront a sudden and immediate danger. As world anxiety heightened with the spreading threat of SARS, Dr. Marra, under intense and prolonged pressure, led the team that decoded the SARS corona virus. The World Health Organization recognized his team as the first to complete this extremely challenging task.

Throughout his career, he has always championed the cause of higher education. He remains closely connected to this university as an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, where he encourages a new generation of researchers to excel in their chosen field.

Marco Marra's personal credo is that we should be courageous in the context of ordinary life. He has stayed true to this credo in his pioneering research. In 2000, we recognized Dr. Marra with the Simon Fraser University Outstanding