



## SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Honorary Degree Citation  
The degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*  
conferred on Dr. Kelvin Ogilvie  
Thursday, June 13, 2013

Madam Chancellor, over the course of his distinguished career, Dr. Kelvin Ogilvie has served as a biochemical researcher, biotechnology innovator, university president, science-education policymaker, and, since 2009, a Canadian Senator.

A leading expert on biotechnology, bioorganic chemistry and genetic engineering, he became a faculty member in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Manitoba in 1968 and moved to McGill in 1974. There, he developed a general method for the chemical synthesis of large RNA molecules that is still the basis for RNA synthesis worldwide.

In 1981, he developed the Gene Machine, an automated process for the manufacture of DNA. Back then it would have taken months for researchers to synthesize even a small fragment of DNA.

The story goes that Dr. Ogilvie brought his Gene Machine to a large biotechnology conference and invited scientists to write down a DNA sequence that they wanted synthesized. The winner, drawn at random, would have their DNA piece delivered to them on Monday morning after the conference.

The conference crowd was dubious. But Dr. Ogilvie's Gene Machine blew the skeptics away, ushering in the concept of automated DNA synthesis and sparking the biotechnology revolution. Today, this DNA and RNA research is a staple of undergraduate biochemistry curricula worldwide and underpins the experimental work of many researchers, including several here at SFU.

Dr. Ogilvie is also the inventor of Ganciclovir, a drug used worldwide to fight infections in weakened immune systems.

In 2000, the Canadian Society for Chemistry honored these achievements as "Milestones of Canadian Chemistry in the 20th Century". A decade later, he was inducted into the Canadian Science and Engineering Hall of Fame.

Dr. Ogilvie also has a distinguished record in leading Canadian science policy and education. In 1987, he was recruited to Nova Scotia's Acadia University. During his decade-long tenure as President and Vice-Chancellor, he introduced the Acadia Advantage Program, which integrated laptop computers into the university's undergraduate curriculum. It was such a revolutionary idea in its day that it was incorporated into the Permanent Collection of the Smithsonian Institute in 1999.

He has also been extremely active in national science policy and development bodies, including the Atomic Energy Control Board, the National Biotechnology Advisory Committee, and the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. Dr. Ogilvie was made a member of the Order of Canada in 1991 and received the Manning Principal Award as Canada's outstanding contributor to innovation in 1992.

Madam Chancellor, on behalf of the Senate of this university, I ask that you now confer upon Kelvin Ogilvie, a scholar, scientist and Senator who represents the highest standard of excellence in scientific research, policy and innovation, the degree of Doctor of Science, honoris causa