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## **SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY**

### **Honorary Degree Citations The degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, conferred on Dr. George Pederson Friday, June 6, 2003**

Mr. Chancellor, I am especially honoured to present Dr. George Pedersen, this institution's seventh President. An educator and administrator of subtle sensibility, he is both a great champion of education and one of its most thoughtful critics. In a remarkable career that has seen him hold the office of President in five universities, he has set an enviable standard as a leader of vision and compassion.

Four words define George Pedersen's contributions to education: innovation, quality, dedication, and excellence. He began his career as a classroom teacher, then became vice-principal and principal in North Vancouver. Drawn to further studies, he attended the University of Chicago, where he completed his Ph.D, receiving ten major scholarships in this great university. Three short years later, he was appointed Dean and later Vice-President Academic at the University of Victoria. There, his exceptional talents came to the fore, providing the impetus which later resulted in a new law school and the schools of public administration, social work, and nursing.

A modest man, he preferred to give others credit for these achievements. Indeed, he is much admired as a mentor who is quick to recognize and encourage talent in others, and generous in his praise of their accomplishments. This is the mark of a true leader, and George's commitment to co-operation and collaboration has inspired all those who have worked with him.

We, too, have relied on his insight and experience. As President of this university, George Pedersen authored a significant chapter in its history. He devoted himself to building an all-encompassing community. He laid the groundwork for the creation of our engineering program, encouraged the establishment of SFU/Downtown, and initiated a sustained effort to build permanent bridges with our alumni and the broader community. When in 1983 he was installed President of the University of British Columbia, our loss was that institution's gain. Subsequently, as President of the University of Western Ontario, founding President of Royal Roads University, and interim President and now Chancellor of the University of Northern British Columbia, he has been and continues to be a fierce advocate for academic freedom, adequate funding, and strong community bonds.

George Pedersen has done much to build SFU as one of Canada's great universities. He has done much and continues to do much to build the strong university system of British Columbia. He has been a leader amongst the leaders of Canadian universities, and he continues to share his warm friendship, his fine sense of humour, the wealth of his experience and wisdom with those who have picked up where he has led. Mr. Chancellor, to show our respect, admiration, and affection, on behalf of the Senate of this University, I ask that you now confer upon Dr. K. George Pedersen the degree Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.