



## SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

### Honorary Degree Citation

The degree of Doctor of Laws , honoris causa,  
conferred on Dr. Rupert Raj  
Thursday , October 6, 2022

Madam Chancellor, I am pleased to present Rupert Raj, a trailblazing transgender activist who has spent more than 50 years advocating for trans rights in Canada and abroad.

Rupert was born in Ottawa. From a young age, he knew that he needed to transition. At the time, resources for trans people were rare and transphobia and ignorance were common. So Rupert travelled to New York City in 1971 to start his medical transition.

Returning home, as a 19-year-old trans man, he recognized the need for services and information to support transsexual, transgender, genderqueer, intersex and Two-Spirit people in North America and abroad. So, he began his support and fight for trans rights. He founded peer-support groups and became a gender consultant, psychotherapist and a strong voice and role model for those in and outside of the trans community.

Rupert has delivered trans-positive training workshops to healthcare professionals, educators, lawyers, employers and politicians. This work has helped create inclusive and diverse environments where trans people are respected. As an expert witness, he has testified on behalf of transgender human rights complainants. He has edited three transsexual newsletters, written several trans-focused papers for scholarly journals and published three books, including *Trans Activism in Canada* and *Dancing the Dialectic: True Tales of a Transgender Trailblazer*. Rupert has received many awards for his lifetime of leadership and service to gender-diverse communities and was inducted into the National Portrait Collection of The ArQuives, Canada's LGBTQ2+ archives.

Madam Chancellor, Rupert Raj exemplifies SFU's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. His relentless work in supporting the transgender community has increased and improved medical care for trans people, and made space for the normalization and acceptance of gender-diverse people in our society. For his lifelong dedication to the advancement of trans rights here in Canada and globally, I ask that you now confer upon Rupert Raj the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.