



## **SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY**

### **Honorary Degree Citations The degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, conferred on Dr. Robert Davidson Friday, June 3, 1994**

Mr. Chancellor, it is an honour to present Robert Davidson, acclaimed Haida artist whose magnificent body of work calls into play our capacity to feel, to imagine, and to reflect.

"What I try to do," Robert Davidson has said " is to connect people to the world- through the art." And indeed, through his work he has joined the past to the present and extended the rich traditions of Haida art into the future. Astonishing in its variety, technical skill, and creativity, his art transcends culture and speaks to a universal humanity.

If any one symbol represents his achievement, it is the circle. Not a traditional Haida form, the circle for Robert Davidson has a special meaning. The past-experience, knowledge, culture-is inside the circle. The future lies outside, and we live on the thin line between. To expand the circle, Robert Davidson believes we must first know what is inside it. His life is a quest to understand the past and to extend the circle's radius.

Raised in the village of Masset on Haida Gwaii, and guided by the wisdom of his elders, Robert Davidson gained a profound sense of the complexity and richness of his culture, a sense that would further be heightened when as a young art student in Vancouver he undertook a personal odyssey to study Haida art. His voyage of exploration led him to Bill Reid, from whom he learned the principles of Haida design.

His journey transformed him. Using his profound knowledge of the traditions of Haida art, Robert Davidson began to broaden its vocabulary, de