

Jack Jeffery

Mr Chancellor,

The family of Jack Jeffery CBE can boast three generations of affiliation with this Institution; the University, for its part, is proud to boast of its enduring affiliation with one of its most successful alumni, whose career has spanned science, engineering and the highest levels of business management.

Jack is a local lad, brought up in Stanley, County Durham, where his innate intelligence won him a place in the town's grammar school. Jack recalls with warmth how his Mam took on extra work to make sure that he was able to participate as fully as any other student in the wider opportunities offered by Stanley Grammar and, in due course, King's College, where Jack graduated with a BSc in Chemistry and Bacteriology in 1953. Jack then took up employment in the scientific division of the National Coal Board, based at Norwood Coke Works in Dunston. His talent was soon spotted by the regional Chief Scientist, who seconded Jack into the laboratories in Newcastle to undertake a specific research project on the removal of phenols and thiocyanate from cokeworks' effluents. Jack excelled at research, and went on to spend 8 years in the lab. During this time, he cultivated fruitful links with King's College, which recognised his efforts with the award of a research-based MSc in Applied Science in 1960.

Even in the early 1960s, the North East coal industry was already showing signs of decline. Finding himself in possession of rare skills and experience in high-tech wastewater treatment, Jack then decided to transfer his skills to another sector. The tale of Jack's ensuing rise to an internationally leading position in the water industry would fill a book. Let's just list a few highlights:

- Jack is one of only two individuals ever to have simultaneously headed two UK water companies (North Surrey Water Ltd and Tendring Hundred Water Services).
- Since 1989, Jack has been a Director of *Compagnie des Eaux*, based in Paris, and has formerly held senior Board positions with WRc plc and East Surrey Holdings plc
- Perhaps for his sins, but more likely for his virtues, Jack was Chairman of the Water Companies' Association throughout the most fraught period in its history, during the process of privatisation in the late 1980s.
- No sooner had that process run to successful completion than Jack was appointed by the Secretary of State to the Badenoch Committee, which was charged with investigating the problems associated with

Cryptosporidium in water supplies. If you've never suffered from *Crypto* infection there are two things to say: firstly, you should be grateful, as it is extremely unpleasant; and secondly, you owe a debt of thanks to Jack Jeffery and his colleagues!

In view of all of this activity, it will come as no surprise to learn that Jack has been welcomed into the highest categories of affiliation by numerous professional associations, including the Freshwater Biological Association, the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management, the Chartered Institution of Water Officers, the Institute of Management, the American Waterworks Association, the Worshipful Company of Plumbers and the Royal Society of Arts. Most recently, he became President of the Royal Institute of Public Health, the first non-medic ever elected to this position.

All work and no play would make Jack a dull boy; fortunately, Jack is far from dull! From his early days as Captain of the Stanley Grammar cricket team, Jack has gone on to membership of the MCC, and since retiring from the crease has maintained his passionate interest in all things associated with the wicket. He is one of the most distinguished co-travellers with the barmy army, having recently followed England's fortunes in Australia, South Africa and – ah, the belated bliss! – Trent Bridge. A regular cricket tourist to Barbados, the

Caribbean is also the setting for Jack to indulge his passion for live Jazz, on a forthcoming cruise for serious *aficionados*.

Since retiring from the water industry and returning to his beloved North-East, Jack's managerial expertise has been in high demand from the waste management industry in the region, which he serves through two Directorships. On the global stage, he is Chairman of the World Humanity Action Trust, which is making important contributions to the crucial debates over how to achieve sustainable development. In the midst of all of these commitments, Jack has made manifest his continuing commitment to this University in innumerable ways. As Chairman of Convocation, he has led the recent renaissance in our outreach to our alumni. As a prominent member of our Development Council, and as Chairman of its 'Transforming the Environment' Board, Jack has been instrumental in helping the University secure philanthropic funding for environmental initiatives from major corporate donors, with the half million pound donation from HSBC Bank being an early example. Indeed, Jack is himself is a major donor, supporting both environmental research and the University's efforts to ensure that we continue to recruit people of immense talent from the successor institution to the grammar school which Jack attended at the outset of his dazzling career.

In recognition of an illustrious alumnus who has put his enormous talents at the service of mankind, particularly here in his home University, I ask you now, Mr Chancellor, to bestow an Honorary Fellowship upon Mr Jack Jeffery CBE.

Citation by Professor Paul Younger