

## JOE CARLEBACH

Mr Chancellor,

There are three kinds of Geordies: Cradle Geordies, Lapsed Geordies and Born-Again Geordies. Now is no time to ponder those poor lost souls, the Lapsed Geordies. But if forced to express a preference between Cradle Geordies and Born-again Geordies, I'd have to say that, on balance, the latter tend to have the edge. How can I justify such a controversial judgement? Well, I'd say that too many of us Cradle Geordies are burdened with what Austin Mitchell MP called "a superiority complex based on a clamorous feeling of inferiority": it's sadly the case that stay-at-home Cradle Geordies often fail to really appreciate just what makes our region so special. Born-Again Geordies have no such problem: arriving here after ample life experience elsewhere, most of them go on to become the staunchest and most confident champions of the great natural and human qualities of the North East. The Geordie Diaspora includes both Cradle and Born-Again types, and both tend to pine equally for the 'Fog on the Tyne'. Indeed it is precisely when in exile that the Cradle Geordie finally realises what the Born-Again Geordies have always been going on about.

Joe Carlebach is a perfect example of all that is wonderful about the Born-Again Geordie. Arriving in Newcastle in 1980 to read for his Honours degree in Politics and Social Administration, Joe swiftly fell in love with this place. His is a love that has endured. Not

only has he retained the strongest of links to his alma mater: in spite of all temptations, he remains a loyal follower of Newcastle United!

A tutor from his undergraduate years recalls that, even then, Joe was always smartly turned-out – an almost unique attribute amongst the scruffy student body of those post-punk years. Twenty-five years later, the University's Alumni Relations officers unhesitatingly describe Joe as “one the snappiest-dressed alumni we have”.

And yet his commendable care for his appearance is the least of Joe's major attributes. He has outstanding inter-personal skills: great charm, a natural modesty, and a real flair for inspiring others to give their best. His former tutor recalls Joe exercising this rare ability in seminars, as do former sabbatical officers who worked alongside him in his role as President of the Students' Union. After leaving the University, this same ability was put to great use in Joe's early posts as a Human Resources officer; later it provided lift-off for his stratospheric success in the business world.

Everyone who knows Joe comments on his highly-honed social conscience. Drawing on rich Jewish traditions of justice and compassion, Joe comes from a family with a proud track record of siding with the oppressed – not least in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. Arriving in the UK via Kenya, where Joe was born, his parents raised him in Brighton. Before he came to University, Joe had already got his first taste of voluntary work – on

a kibbutz in Israel – and had taken his first steps as a committed political activist. For all he pursued his beliefs with passion, he always did so with his characteristic consideration for the views and feelings of others. After completing his terms as Union President, Joe wrote to the then-Vice-Chancellor Professor Laurence Martin: “I always felt that, though we may not have agreed on everything, we could agree to differ. I hope my successors have adhered to this principle”.

Since graduating Joe has accumulated more than 25 years’ experience in the telecoms, technology and new media sectors, in posts ranging from personnel officer, through Chief Executive, to Chairman. He is currently Chairman of classical.com, which has brought the convenience of mp3 downloads to the world of classical music. Joe also chairs the business consultancy H.E.C-Ventures – H.E.C. being the initials of his firstborn daughter. Drawing on his vast commercial experience and enormous goodwill network, Joe helps faltering companies first to find their way, then to grow and become secure enterprises, thus guaranteeing the livelihoods of their founders and employees.

Joe’s philanthropic urges are by no means confined to the workplace. He does a great deal of voluntary work for the Kensington Police Association, encouraging fruitful dialogue between disparate neighbourhood groups. Joe continually places his business skills and contacts network at the service of a wide range of charities, including the Willow Foundation and the WRVS.

Joe has been no less generous in his service of this University. He chairs our Medical Faculty Development Board, taking a keen interest in transformative health initiatives, and in initiatives to ensure that bright students from all backgrounds are able to avail themselves of University education. Joe also serves on our Development and Alumni Relations Council, where his wisdom and instinctive networking have been used to great effect.

For all Joe's career has kept him in London all these years, he seldom passes up a chance to return to his beloved Newcastle. The region could be said to have reciprocated his devotion when, whilst running a careers fair out of the Gosforth Park Hotel, Joe met the love of his life, Melanie, with whom he now shares the delights of parenthood. Joe is a dedicated husband and father, who positively revels in the time he lavishes on his daughters Hannah and Charlotte. A breathtaking collection of single malt whiskies is the nearest Joe gets to a dissolute lifestyle; but any indulgence in the delights of Glenmorangie are more than compensated for by his frequent and strenuous workouts at the gym.

Since he first came to Newcastle more than 28 years ago, Joe Carlebach has proved himself a devoted friend and servant of this University and this community. His commitment to the highest philanthropic ideals, pursued with unassuming charm, mark him out as a man in a million. We are proud to claim Joe Carlebach as a great Born-Again Geordie, for whom a warm welcome will always be

assured in these parts. Ha'way then, Mr Chancellor: please give wor  
Joe an Honorary Fellowship of Newcastle University.

**Citation by Professor Paul Younger**