

Mr Chancellor,

My paternal grandmother, a Yorkshire lass of Cornish extraction, was very fond of obscure statements with hidden meanings. One of her favourites was: “the apple doesn’t fall very far from the tree”. Aside from the literal truth of this statement, the underlying inference is that a child is very like its parent. I haven’t thought of this phrase in years, but it sprang to mind when I was speaking to Professor Tim Ingold, brother of Patsy Healey, our honorary graduand. He told me that he and his sister shared a very similar outlook on life and scholarship, which he attributed to the pervasive influence of their father, the mycologist, Professor C T Ingold. Speaking of the latter, Tim observed:

“He was a man who had an extraordinarily fine eye for his surroundings, who insisted on seeing things in their living context, and who would have absolutely no truck with academic pretentiousness of any kind. He also knew, (though he would never admit it), that you had to be in love with what you study.”

The sentiments conveyed by this statement are amply evidenced in the life and work of Professor Patsy Healey. Following a degree in Geography at University College London, Patsy initially trained as a teacher and a planner, then “fell into a role” as planning officer in the London Borough of Lewisham. At that time, (the late nineteen sixties), the planning process had little to do with producing ideal practical solutions, but was essentially about political culture and was dominated by complex bureaucracy; or as Patsy succinctly puts it, “there was a lot of planning without any clear idea as to *why* they were doing it.” Patsy’s own evolving philosophy, refined through

her doctoral studies at the London School of Economics, led her to the opinion that in order to deliver societal good, rather than simply generate complex policy and debate, the planning process must fully engage with and listen to, the communities it seeks to serve.

Patsy's work as Chair of the Glendale Community Trust is a fine example of this approach in practice. Initially drawn to engage with the Trust as a village resident and through her own research interests in urban partnerships and small non-governmental initiatives, Patsy subsequently led the Trust through numerous successful initiatives to secure and develop its Community assets. Whilst aware that her academic knowledge and contacts could benefit the group, she deliberately adopted a strategy which made it possible for her knowledge to be "infused" into the Trust through subtle suggestions. These were always offered up with due respect and consideration for what others might have to offer. As she wryly observes, "it would be a terrible mistake to give lectures all the time." Her input has been informed by a very strong sense of civic responsibility and the inherent belief that we should all be willing to be involved in our local community and contribute to its development.

Patsy Healey joined Newcastle University in 1988 as Chair of Planning, having previously held posts at what were then Kingston and Oxford Polytechnics. She led the department at Newcastle through a hugely transformative period which included the merger of Planning with Architecture to form a new School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape. A collaborative and effective team builder, she did much to facilitate the development of a school culture, and her ideas and enthusiasm inspired others to explore new directions. During her tenure, the school went on to gain an international reputation, largely inspired by her leadership and

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example. Many of her postgraduate students have become distinguished academics in their own right. Professor Simin Davoudi, who had the distinction of being the first postgraduate student she supervised at Newcastle, has this to say of her, “Like many other individuals, I have been inspired by her intellect, integrity, modesty, generosity of spirit and unique capacity to bring out the best in those who work with her.” She is held in great affection by her colleagues, who are very proud to have been associated with her and are delighted that she is to receive this latest honour.

The significance of Patsy’s contributions to the field of planning have been widely recognised. She is a fellow of University College London, and holds an Honorary Degree from Chalmers University in Gothenburg, Sweden. In 1999, she was awarded an OBE for Services to Planning. An Honorary Fellow of the Association of European Planners, in 2006, Patsy was awarded the highly prestigious Royal Town Planning Institute Gold Medal – a singular honour not least because there have only been three of these awards made since 1983 and this was the first occasion it had been presented to a woman.

Although she officially retired from the University in 2002, Patsy continues to be associated with the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape as a Professor Emeritus, and member of the Institute for Policy and Practice. She recently completed work on the experience of strategic spatial planning in city regions, with in-depth case studies in the UK, Italy and The Netherlands. Freed from the commitments of a senior academic role, she still writes extensively and the titles of some of her recent books, “*Collaborative Planning*” and “*Making Better Places*” highlight the very practical focus of her professional interests. She is also Senior Editor of *Planning Theory and Practice*, one of the leading professional journals in the

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field. Her intellectual curiosity has led her to pursue a wide range of other interests, including prehistoric settlements in Northumbria and supporting commemorative activity for the Battle of Flodden. She also enjoys singing in her local choir.

In addition to being a distinguished academic, Patsy is an enthusiastic and accomplished gardener; a passion she inherited from her mother, Norah Ingold. Her garden in Wooler is said to be a delight, as is her home made plum jam! Which in a curiously roundabout way, brings me back to the apples and trees of my opening remarks.

Let me conclude with a quotation from the celebrated garden designer, Vita Sackville-West, who observed:

“The most noteworthy thing about gardeners is that they are always optimistic, always enterprising and never satisfied. They always look forward to doing something better...”

Whether it be as a gardener or a planner, all of these qualities ring true for Patsy.

Mr Chancellor, in recognition of her work as a leading specialist in planning theory and practice, I present to you Patsy Healey, OBE, as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Civil Law, *honoris causa*

*Citation by Jill Taylor-Roe, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2015*