

Mr Chancellor,

What links entrepreneurship, competitive cycling, sailing, rally driving and philanthropy - other than the fact that they are all activities at which Mark I'Anson, has excelled? As we recognise and honour his work for the University, I wanted to reflect on some of the qualities that have contributed to his success in all of these fields, and as Chair of Council.

I am indebted to Emeritus Vice-Chancellor Professor Chris Brink for summarising the skills of an effective Chair of Council. First and foremost, they have to have a good idea of what the University actually does. This is not easy to define, as the University is a many-splendored thing, and even the Vice-Chancellor may not be fully aware of every nook and cranny. Secondly, they need to have a sound understanding of the internal and external regulatory environment, including all the committees, sub-committees, working parties, disciplinary and interdisciplinary structures that we work with. If they don't have expertise in governance when they take up the role, they need to acquire it very quickly! It also helps if they have a genuine regard for academic life. And finally, they need to appreciate that in matters great and small, they will universally be seen as the last Court of Appeal for staff and students.

That's quite a tall order. So it's probably just as well that one of the first qualities that stands out about Mark is his capacity to see both the bigger picture and the steps that are needed to translate that broader vision into reality. MaryJo, Mark's wife, told me "he is a logician, who finds it easy to see the relationships between ideas and concepts, and then to plot a course of action that weaves them all together."

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A fine example of this was when we held exploratory talks with Durham about the possible transfer to Newcastle of their School of Medicine, Pharmacy and Health. The negotiations were delicate and complex, particularly given the history of the two institutions. Once the transfer had been agreed, there were many steps to be identified, implemented, communicated and carefully negotiated through Senate and Council before the transfer could be effected. Mark's diplomacy, clarity of thought and sureness of touch contributed in no small part to the success of the venture.

Another quality for which Mark is renowned is his willingness to take a (calculated) risk. It took a real leap of faith for Mark and his friend and business partner, David Liddell, to leave the Open University in 1982 to set up their first business, Integrated Micro Products. They grew the business from a porta cabin on the old Consett Steelworks site, where it was so cold in the winter, they had to wear coats and gloves in the office. By the late 1980s they realised they needed to expand and came up with the idea of buying a company in California. It was a big risk and their Finance Director was dead against it. However, they took the plunge and the gamble paid off handsomely. In 1994, they floated the company on the US NASDAQ stock exchange. Mark is justly proud of the fact that it was one of the first businesses in the North East of England to successfully do this. It was ultimately bought by Sun Microsystems. At one point in 1999, Mark reckons that around 30% of internet traffic was controlled by computer servers manufactured in Consett. That's a pretty amazing achievement.

Success of this magnitude requires a lot of hard work. Friends and family shared many examples of how Mark applies himself with dedicated thoroughness to anything he sets his mind to. From regattas to rallying, and more recently cycling, his work ethic and preparation is exemplary. Mark

decided to celebrate his sixtieth birthday by undertaking the Route des Alpes to raise money for Ageing Research at the University. He has subsequently taken part in many other races. His daughter Becky told me that his dedication is such that he now measures everything on Strava so he can review his statistics. She added that he was willing to share absolutely anything – apart from his Pinnarello bike.

Everyone I spoke to had a story that demonstrated Mark's people skills. I particularly liked the one from Barbara Gubbins, who worked with him at the County Durham Community Foundation for nine years. She described him as "one of the best motivational speakers I've ever heard", adding that they were like The Two Ronnies when they were at the board table. I bet those meetings were fun! In a similar vein, Lauren Langton, who works with Mark as co-founder of Northumberland Community Bank, told me that not only was he a wonderful mentor, he was great at instilling confidence, or as she put it, "the insurmountable always feels surmountable after a chat with Mark."

Piyush Patel, one of Mark's closest friends, remembers him as a student at Cambridge, "with long trusses of hair down to his shoulders." Well it was the 1970s. Whilst praising his intelligence and versatility and noting that he could have been a very successful politician, Piyush told me that Mark has always had a great sense of fairness and social conscience. This is clearly evident in his work for the community foundation and community bank. Mark told me that he was motivated by an inspirational book called "*The Spirit Level: why equality is better for everyone*" by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett. Its key message is that the health of our democracies, our societies and their people is dependent on greater equality. As a University with a commitment to social justice, that core message also resonates strongly here.

I'm told that Mark is always up with the lark and likes to have at least a couple of jobs under his belt by breakfast. It's not just work that benefits from his exemplary planning – MaryJo tells me that one of the reasons he is so good at preparing Christmas dinner for the family is that he works out all the cooking times on a spreadsheet. However, she did confide that he gets a bit grumpy when the meal is ready to serve and folk aren't prompt in coming to the table. I have to confess that I am absolutely with Mark on this one – and if he has any handy tips on how to get the laggards to the table, I'd be delighted to hear them.

To demonstrate integrity and balance in this citation, I feel it is only fair to point out that not everything Mark has undertaken has been an unqualified success. I am reliably informed by MaryJo that very early on in their relationship, they were making cheesecakes at a birthday party hosted by their friends Piyush and Janneke. MaryJo was not impressed by Mark's unsuccessful attempts to whip cream for the cheesecake mix. However, despite that early culinary failure, she accepted his invitation to join him the following weekend on a treasure hunt with the Cambridge University Automobile Club, where his competitive spirit was very much to the fore.

It is fitting that I should conclude my citation with a few words from our current Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Chris Day: “Mark I'Anson has been, and continues to be, an outstanding supporter and ally of the University. I am sorry that I only worked directly with him as Chair of Council for six months as Vice-Chancellor, however I had the pleasure of benefiting from his wise counsel during all my nine years as PVC of the Faculty of Medical Sciences. His clarity of thought and purpose and ability to identify the critical issues for both the Faculty and the University never ceased to

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impress me – as did his remarkable feats of endurance in the saddle of his bike
- though I was not a big fan of his Lycra outfits!”

Mr Chancellor, in recognition of his exemplary service to the University, his outstanding entrepreneurship, and his enterprising and effective work in community engagement, I present to you, Mark I'Anson, MBE, as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Civil Law, *honoris causa*.

Citation by Jill Taylor-Roe, Public Orator

16th July, 2018