Professor Day,

It is an honour to welcome Dame Julia Hoggett, Chief Executive Officer of London Stock Exchange plc. Julia has spent her entire career in capital markets and is an inspirational leader, particularly for her pioneering work on behalf of women and the LGBTQ+ community, and for her longstanding commitment to encouraging investment in the green economy.

Julia was born in Stockport and, despite losing her accent after moving to London for school, still considers herself a Northerner —something she says is revealed by her pronunciation of Newcastle with a short “a”. Her father, John Hoggett KC, is an eminent barrister, and her mother, Baroness Hale - who I am delighted to say is in the audience today with Julia’s partner Wendy - had a distinguished legal career culminating in her service as President of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom.

One might suppose that Julia was destined for a legal career, but she has consistently defied expectations. As she once said: “If you’d planned based on what was visible to you at the time you started your career, you would have lowballed the plan. What you think you're capable of at the time is not necessarily what time proves you're capable of.”

Determined to build her own path, Julia took what she calls a “handbrake turn” and chose to study Sociology at Cambridge University. While completing postgraduate research on Malawi’s response to the oil crises of the 1970s and 1980s, she realised that the answers she sought were unlikely to be found in the University Library. Her father suggested she explore investment banking to understand markets and capital flows directly. Julia regards this as a major “sliding doors” moment, even if he later claimed to have no memory of the conversation.

Julia chose to join J P Morgan for two significant reasons. First, the firm's employment contract explicitly protected employees from dismissal on the basis of sexuality, at a time when sexual orientation was not a protected characteristic. Second, it offered a comprehensive training programme. Julia recognised its value because, by her own admission, when she joined the bank, she still did not know what a bond was.

At interview, one panellist asked what would stop her returning to academia once she had found the answers she was looking for. Since that was indeed her plan, Julia thought for a moment and replied that she would stay as long as the work remained "endlessly fascinating, endlessly changeable and endlessly difficult." Academia is still waiting for her return.

At J P Morgan, Julia focused on Emerging Markets and Sovereign and Supranational Agency Debt Origination. She later joined the DEPFA Bank group before joining Bank of America Merrill Lynch in a role that included leading on Green Bonds for Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

This marked the beginning of her deep involvement with environmental, social and governance principles – values shared by our University and reflected in our sustainability initiatives, our teaching in Green Finance, and our research across Environmental, Earth, Ocean and Planetary Sciences. Throughout her career, Julia has encouraged listed companies to embrace Net Zero targets, and under her leadership the London Stock Exchange has become a leading provider of green and transition finance.

Her LSE colleague Claire Dorrian, Head of Sustainable Finance, Capital Markets, tells me that Julia's work in this area greatly contributed to the announcement at COP26 that the London Stock Exchange was developing a Voluntary Carbon Market solution to increase investment in carbon mitigation projects around the world.

A second defining thread of Julia's career has been her advocacy for women and the LGBTQ+ community in financial services. She joined J P Morgan because of its commitment to LGBTQ+ rights but initially expected that, when she swiped her ID card through the office barriers, she would "leave the real me on the outside and pick her up on the way home."

Thanks to supportive parents and an encouraging line manager, Julia joined the firm's LGBTQ+ network—a decision she describes as a tremendous gift because she no longer had to "waste emotional energy on hiding who I am. I could just be me."

As one of the few openly gay senior leaders in the City at the time, Julia recognised a responsibility to share her experiences so others could see a future for themselves in financial services. For more than two decades she has been an influential voice on diversity and inclusion. Her philosophy is clear: "we get the best decisions when we have the broadest perspectives." Despite current challenges to diversity initiatives and environmental sustainability, she remains steadfast in those beliefs, as does the institution she leads.

After Merrill Lynch, Julia became Director of Market Oversight at the Financial Conduct Authority, helping to design the supervision of investment-bank conduct in the aftermath of major market scandals. As ever, she had not mapped out her next step. Instead, she followed her mother's advice: "Do what you're doing to the utter best of your ability, trust that opportunities will come from that and don't close yourself off to those opportunities."

That opportunity arrived unexpectedly when a headhunter asked: "Julia, why haven't you applied for the role of CEO at the LSE?" It was another "sliding doors" moment.

Since becoming CEO in 2021, Julia has had a profound impact. Alongside her work on sustainability and inclusion, she has helped reshape the narrative around the London Stock Exchange by addressing the relationship between public and private markets and by supporting market modernisation. She helped found and now chairs the UK's Capital Markets Industry Taskforce, whose objective is to ensure that the UK remains the best place for great companies to start, grow, scale and stay.

If that phrase sounds familiar, it is largely because of Julia's efforts to communicate the importance of vibrant capital markets and their contribution to national prosperity. Her descriptions of the LSE as a "300-year-old fintech" and a "convenor of capital", alongside references to "the five-fingered glove of reform" have become so well known among colleagues that they jokingly refer to playing "Julia bingo".

Yet when that language is adopted by economists, journalists, and Chancellors it signals something more significant: a changed perception of the Stock Exchange's role and the importance of capital markets to the wider economy.

Although not carefully planned, Julia's career now appears a masterclass in acquiring precisely the experience needed for her current role. As she has observed: "I've been an issuer, I've run a bank that was also an investor, I've been a regulator, a policymaker. It gives you context. And when you lead with context, hopefully you can lead with reasonable judgement."

Alongside these achievements, Julia is also a mother to Patrick and Amelia and a partner to Wendy. While she appreciates recognition such as her Damehood in 2024, inclusion on Financial News' list of the 100 most influential women on several occasions, and City AM's Industry Leader of the Year award in 2023, her greatest pride is reserved for her family and the teams she has led.

For someone who has spent much of her life setting herself challenges and seeking answers to difficult questions, perhaps the hardest question has been how to relax. In recent years, golf has helped, as have long holidays with Wendy – provided there is reliable Wi-Fi.

Professor Day, as a University committed to sustainability, diversity and equality of opportunity, it is fitting that we recognise the outstanding contributions of someone whose career exemplifies those values through leadership, service and impact. I am therefore proud to present to you Dame Julia Hoggett for admission to the degree of Doctor of Civil Law, honoris causa.

John Williams
Public Orator
13th July, 2026