

*Citation read on the occasion of the granting of the degree of
Honorary Doctor of Laws to
Murray Farmer
by the Senate of the University of Victoria
June 15, 2017*

Madam Chancellor, it is my great privilege to introduce to you and this Convocation, Murray Farmer, whom we celebrate today for his distinguished public service both to this institution and to the broader community.

I am sure, Mme. Chancellor, that you and many of us gathered here to honour Mr. Farmer, remember well that ancient childhood choosing game, for today so eponymously titled. I am also willing to bet that not many of us playing that game, ever questioned where the farmer might be found—"in the dell," of course. But what *is* a dell? A small woodland glade, according to my dictionary *but* on closer etymological examination, the history is somewhat richer: derived from the Old Dutch word, "*deel*", it can mean "the work space in a barn." Now the possibilities of the university/barn metaphor I leave to others more imaginative than I, but I have no difficulty in seeing this beautiful auditorium, where he served for six years, as the very public "workspace" of our Chancellor Emeritus. The farmer is back in his dell once more and we joyfully cry "Heigh-ho the derry-o!" Welcome home!

Victoria is where Murray Farmer was born and raised. The University of Victoria is where he pursued his bachelor's degree in Economics, graduating in 1968. A life-long learner, Murray's practical education began with Farmer Construction Limited, a firm started by his father, George. Here Murray served in many capacities; his success evidenced by the increasingly responsible positions he held. Most significantly, Murray was elected, in 2005, chair of The Canadian Construction Association where he represented nationally, one of Canada's largest industrial groups.

Over the years of his career, Murray has lent his business experience and acumen to a wide variety of community organizations: the Royal BC Museum; BC Government House Foundation; United Way of Greater Victoria; Royal Jubilee Hospital Foundation; the Victoria Foundation and many others. But I note for this record, two extraordinary sites of his attention and care. The Shaw Centre for the Salish Sea in Sidney, BC, that remarkable educational centre which opened in 2009 and for which he and his wife, Lynda, as co-chairs, headed a campaign to raise over 5 million dollars. Together, again they served as co-chairs for "TRADEmark of Excellence" our sister institution Camosun College Foundation's successful campaign to ensure an enhanced and innovative educational facility for the trades. For these and other good works, Murray has received

two Queen's Jubilee Medals (2003 and 2012), and in 2005, the Generosity of Spirit Award for leadership and community support.

The second verse of that choosing game is that "the farmer takes a wife" and in honouring Murray today, we acknowledge the vital role Lynda has played as partner in Murray's life. Many of the awards that he has received have also recognized Lynda and together they were appointed, in 2014, Honorary Citizens of the City of Victoria and, just last year, received the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce Governors' Lifetime Achievement Award for their commitment to community.

In 2016, Murray accepted the position of Honorary Colonel of the century-old Victoria infantry regiment, the Canadian Scottish (Princess Mary's). Not part of the job description but certainly an advantage, considering the requirements of the Scottish dress uniform, are a good-looking pair of knees. And knees, Mme. Chancellor, are pretty central to our understanding of Murray Farmer and his considerable and consistent contributions to the University of Victoria since his graduation

A licensed pilot of boats and airplanes, on land Murray Farmer has been a polo player almost all his life. This team sport is one of the fastest and most dangerous. With a long, whippety mallet in the right hand and the reins in the other, it is through the rider's knees that balance is maintained and intentions communicated—a delicate display of tensile strength under enormous pressure in a field on which eight horses and their riders pound up and down—a kind of hockey on horseback. Polo requires of its players core capacities that are indicative of the qualities that Murray Farmer has brought to his connections to business and the university: dignity under pressure, a fine civility, and an appreciation of risk. I should also note that Mr. Farmer's mallet arm has, without faltering, doffed the shoulders or clasped the hands of some 26,000 graduates during his terms as Chancellor.

A long-serving member of the Board of Governors of which he was appointed Chair in 2007, champion of First People's House and Student Financial Aid, Murray has supported many initiatives of this university, notably the establishment of the Venus and Neptune Projects and the evolution of the School of Business. Recently, he and Lynda have been significant players in the creation of CARSA, UVic's new Centre for Athletics, Recreation and Special Abilities.

But it has been in those thousands of acts of recognition during convocations, that Murray Farmer has demonstrated his extraordinary sense of what the University of Victoria means to him. The gentleness, respect, and warmth with which he greeted students who walked across this stage signaled his shared memories with each of them of that brief walk into a new future and his own deep understanding of and commitment to his "work" as Chancellor.

For that and his continuing years of service to his community and this university, I present, Mme. Chancellor, Murray Farmer, for the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.

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