

Dean of the School of Health Sciences, Head of the Faculty of Nursing, the honorary doctoral candidate, other distinguished guests.

I would like to welcome you all to this ceremony for the presentation of an honorary doctorate from the Faculty of Nursing at the School of Health Sciences. Today we honour Lesley Page, visiting professor at the Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery King's College London and University College Sydney. She is awarded an honorary doctorate for her work advancing the field of midwifery in Icelandic society, as I will describe in more detail shortly.

The laws on the University of Iceland have always included a specific section granting University faculties the right to award doctorates, on two separate bases. Doctorates may be awarded following a special examination or 'for the sake of honour', *honoris causa*, without the candidate undergoing an examination. As the name of the title suggests, an honorary doctorate is awarded to honour the candidate and the University of Iceland. An honorary doctorate is also a way for the University to recognise exceptional contributions to the University or outstanding accomplishments in its interests. Those who receive this accolade must have achieved significant success in their career and be generally celebrated in their field, either as scholars, cultural pioneers, or spiritual or secular leaders.

The awarding of honorary doctorates has always been an active part of the University's work. The first to receive the title was Dr Björn M. Olsen, Rector of the University, who was honoured in 1918 when he retired as a professor. Since then, around 200 people have been awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Iceland, both Icelanders and international candidates. It is particularly gratifying that Lesley Page will now join this group.

Over the course of a long and distinguished career in midwifery practice, management and research, Lesley Page has contributed a great deal to the clinical and theoretical development of midwifery. Her research into continuity of care in midwifery has made a strong impact across the world. It has led to changes in midwifery services here in Iceland, such as the establishment of several midwife-led clinics, which are based in part on Lesley Page's ideas about the development and organisation of childbirth services. Two of the first permanent lecturers in midwifery at the University of Iceland completed their graduate studies at Thames Valley University, where she worked, and the connections they made there had a significant influence on the design of the programme and advancement of midwifery research in Iceland. In 1998, Lesley Page taught here as a visiting professor.

There are two main reasons that Lesley Page is being awarded an Honorary Doctorate degree from the Faculty of Nursing: her contribution to developing the curriculum and advancing midwifery at the University of Iceland, and her scholarship and leadership which has been a vital source of inspiration for Icelandic midwifery research over the past few decades.

It is a true honour for the University and the Faculty of Nursing to acknowledge Lesley Page in this way, as we celebrate the 110th anniversary of the founding of the University of Iceland.

I will now hand over to Helga Gottfreðsdóttir, professor at the Faculty of Nursing.

Thank you.