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DOCTOR IN LITTERIS
SHARON SHANNON

ARS MVSICA SALVS ANIMI

Quid opus est laudatione, sodales lepidi, cum multae virtutes huius puellae de Clare infixae haereant in pectore omnium? Liceat tamen oratori vestrae, amabo, pauca per figuras dicere. SHARON SHANNON musica est illustrissima, cui nomen tam clarum est quam flumen nomine eodem, quod fluit haud longe a puellae vico natali Ruadhán. Velut flumen illud, initio rivulus parvulus quidem, sed limpidissimus, eo fortius fit, quo plures terras transierit, ac paulatim increscit ad cursum fluminis quo longior non invenitur in utraque insula nostra, sic huius candidatae et vis et virtus musicae insignes ab adolescentia fulgide se ostenderunt, atque artem musicam Hibernicam traditam tulerunt a conviviiis chorisque saltatoriis in parte occidentali Hiberniae ad theatrum maximum Londiniensem omniaque per orbem terrarum amplissima spectacula. Sicut item flumen plurimis finibus transgressis crescere solet, ita quinquaginta per annos haec musicos mores Hibernicos fideliter custodiebat, nonnullis modis peregrinis sapienter commixtis atque optimis musicis Hibernicis in chorum congregatis, ut comites multisonos sibi adiungeret ostendenti artes ipsius singulares in instrumento quod hinc harmonium, hinc accordeon dicitur. Nam sodales musici consentiunt se neminem tam perite accordeon ludentem antea audivisse. Ipsa vero dicere solet se puellulam ex omnium instrumentis modis Hibernicis adeptis accordeon elegisse, quia id quasi magicum aspectu sibi videbatur; recte, ut testatur quisque audierit eam, dulce ridentem cum sodalibus discipulisve (iuvenum enim studia fovet libenter), magicas quidem melodias ex accordeo diducentem. Magnum quidem officium praestitit et patriae et patriis moribus antiquis, ut cultu ingenioque omnino revivescerent. Nam hac faultrice fortissima sono Hiberniae nunc fruuntur gentes ubique terrarum ac (mirabile visu) etiam convivia more Hibernico saltatoria aemulantur. Illa quae haec instituit tunc de animo muliebri, nunc de terra matre communi, quaecumque alia iniverit consilia communia testantur id esse artem musicam, sublime genus sermonis inter homines simulque memoriae. Candidata nostra, quamvis clarissima per orbem, eadem tamen adhuc est puella quam olim aluit fundus amoenus, cui summum solacium et gaudium praebuit sodalitas et hominum et animalium. Ut olim in pulchris Vergilii carminibus bucolicis, ubi ars musica idem est ac memoria, huius mulieris ars cum amicitia, cum animalibus, cum ipsa rerum natura coniungitur. Quam ob rem, Academici, maxime convenit hanc artificem miram laurea nostra ornare, dum resonant versus summi poetae:

Quae tibi, quae tali reddam pro carmine dona?
nam neque me tantum venientis sibilus Austri
nec percussa iuvant fluctu tam litora, nec quae
saxosas inter decurrunt flumina valles.

DOCTOR IN LETTERS
SHARON SHANNON

MUSIC IS THE MEDICINE OF THE MIND

How does one introduce a living legend? We have all long *lost our hearts on this Clare Girl*, the one and only SHARON SHANNON. Her name is as bright as the river that flows not far from her native village of Ruan. Just as that river, initially little more than a limpid little stream, gains strength and grows into the longest river in these islands, this woman's extraordinary musical talents brilliantly manifested themselves since her teen-age years, and brought Irish traditional music from the céilís in the West of Ireland to the Wembley Arena and all the grandest venues in the world. As the river grows crossing county borders, for fifty years this musician has remained faithful to the Irish traditions while crossing generic boundaries – rock and reggae, to name but a few – and collaborating with all prominent musicians in Ireland, always showing her unique skills with the accordion. Her fellow musicians all concur that no-one had ever played that instrument quite like her before. She recalls that she chose the accordion because as a child she thought that “the accordion was a sort of a magical looking instrument”. The moment she puts her hand on the accordion you see the magic that she creates, and her radiant smile playing with her friends or with the young musicians whose enthusiasm she always encourages. She has done an immense service to her country and to its cultural heritage, for the best thing that one can do with heritage is to make it alive again. The sound of Ireland is now widely appreciated in all corners of the world (imagine a céilí in Japan!). *A Woman's Heart*, *Common Ground*, and her many other collective initiatives bear witness to the truth that music is the most effective form of dialogue and evocative form of memory. For all her worldwide fame, she is still the child who grew up on a farm, finding happiness and comfort in her pets and friends. As in the ancient pastoral world of Virgil's songs, her music is deeply connected with the countryside, with friendship, with animals, with nature; it is a world of shared memories and unconditional love for music. It is therefore appropriate to pay this marvellous musician our tribute of admiration echoing the words of the ancient poet:

What gifts can I give in return for a song such as yours?
Sweeter is it to me than the sound of the South Wind sighing,
Than the shores struck by the waves, than those streams
That cascade down through the rock-strewn valleys.

(Virgil, *Eclogue* 5.81- 84)

DOCTOR IN LITTERIS
COLM TÓIBÍN

Perpaucos scriptores constat singulari esse praeditos ingenio, quod finibus rerum transgressis reconditos animi humani recessus possit impavide scrutari. Antiqua civitas Atheniensium, ut scitis, tragoediarum scriptores eximios habuit qui et supernis et infimis vocem praeberent, Aeschylum Sophoclem Euripidem. Hodierna vero Hibernia interpretem sui perspicacem acerrimumque invenit in hoc principe scriptorum nostrum, COLM TÓIBÍN. Duodecim eius fabulis, permultis fabellis tribus voluminibus collectis, una cum carminibus, fabulis scaenicis ac doctis libellis, lucide exploratur, ut aptissime dicunt, animus ipse Hibernicus temporis nostri. Sed ut qui tam late peregrinatus est quam personae sibi fictae, peritissimus est exiliis diversitatibus doloribusque vivide repraesentandis. Saepius vero Hispaniam repetit terram, in primis regionem Cathalauniam sibi perquam familiarem et celebratam in itineralio urbis Barcinonae magnifice edito. Nam ab illa prima meridiana quadam narratione usque ad recentissimos nuntios Dublinenses, saepe fabulas Hispanienses vel finxit vel refinxit, ut illae de aestate fatali atque de puellis Cathalauniensibus, numquam oculorum aciem avertens a vulneribus luctibusque, donec ad vera quamvis operta atque abscondita palam aperire possit. Mulieres sunt pleraeque fabulis fictae, aliae fere plebeae (ut Elisa illa in exilium profecta), aliae nobilissimae, quibus nullam magis spectandam quam matrem Iesu vidimus candide perlustrantem aegritudines animi sui. Nam cum scriptores feminas perraro accepisset antiqua res publica litterarum, aliquando viri voces modosque suos mulieribus accomodaverunt; sed ne Naso poeta quidem, qui heroidas ventriloquio quodam modo clarissime reddidit, ausus est ad viricidam accedere, Clytaemnestram dico reginam ex Aeschyli Oresteia, sed Hermionem tantum exhibuit Orestis maeste adloquentem: “vix equidem meminisse, meminisse tamen,” inquit, “omnia luctus, / omnia solliciti plena timoris erant”. At quod poeta Romanus temptare noluit, temptavit hic intrepidus, cum odiis hominum spretis reginam perlucide descripsit degentem in palatio mero nomine regio. Tantum enim potest vis imaginifica scriptoris, vel potius dicam creatoris. Virum egregia auctoritate doctrinaque saepissime audivimus artem scribendi acerrime defendere, nonnumquam e cathedris quas tenuit apud Universitates illustres; eum hodie salutamus clarissimum Professore Humanitatis apud Columbianos in civitate Novi Eboraci. Per nos igitur stat committere labori scribendi, ut matrem labori proliis pariendae. Nonne vatum labor sacer et magnus, quia omnia fato eripit et populis donat mortalibus aevum, olim laudabatur a Lucano poeta, qui deos eorumque machinas omnes excludit a carmine heroo, sicut hic a fabulis Hibernicis? Neque pericula novissima tacet vir sapiens, in hoc discrimine dubitans de prosperis rebus humanis; si sapimus, ei fidem et spem dabimus, nos mentem unicuique praecipuam numquam commuturos cum caeco automate: tantum debemus huic auctori et magistro. Sed nunc, quaeso, gratulanter proferte signa clarissima observantiae vestrae.

DOCTOR IN LETTERS
COLM TÓIBÍN

Few writers are specially gifted with the ability to reach into the depths of history and myth and to uncover the darkest recesses of the human heart. Ancient Athens had its tragic playwrights, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, who gave a voice to the divine and the powerless alike. Contemporary Ireland has her most discerning and fierce interpreter in COLM TÓIBÍN, our country's foremost living novelist. His twelve novels and three collections of short stories – together with poems, plays, and non-fiction writings – are often fittingly described as a lucid exploration of the Irish psyche. But he has also travelled as widely in his books as he has in real life, and vividly reimagined cross-cultural encounters and themes of displacement and grief. A recurring destination is Catalan Spain, a place deeply familiar to him and celebrated in his *Homage to Barcelona*. Since that first novel *The South* to the most recent *News from Dublin*, he has imagined, or reinvented, Spanish stories, such as *Summer of '38* and *The Catalan Girls*. He looks at collective and personal tragedies in the eye, until he unearths hidden feelings and “withheld truths”. Many of his characters are women, and many speak in the first person, ordinary women, such as Eilis in *Brooklyn*, and extraordinary women, no-one more extraordinary than the mother of Jesus in *The Testament of Mary*. Western literature has been a man's business for millennia, with only a handful of exceptions in antiquity, and very few male writers have lent their voice to women. Not even Ovid, who famously ventriloquized female heroes, dared approach the character of the murderous queen Clitemnestra from Aeschylus' *Oresteia*; the Roman poet did not go any further than Hermione addressing Orestes: “I scarcely remember, yes, yet remember I do,” she says, “All was grief, everywhere anxiety and fear” (Ovid, *Heroides* 8.75–6). Our candidate ventured where Ovid did not go, and in *House of Names* he gave a protagonist's role and a fully formed life to Clitemnestra, the most unsympathetic woman in Western myth. Creative writing is literally an act of creation. Through authorship and academic leadership, he has been one of the most vocal advocates for the creative mind in our times. He has held numerous visiting professor positions in important institutions on both sides of the Atlantic, and he is currently Irene and Sidney B. Silverman Professor of the Humanities at Columbia University. Let us commit ourselves to the labour that, as he has taught us, any act of creation requires. The “sacred and great toil of bards rescue all things from fate and grant eternity to mortal people,” wrote the Roman poet who removed the divine apparatus from the world of epic (Lucan, *Civil War* 9.980-1), just as our candidate eliminated the divine it from his representations of classical tragedy and challenged it in his inquiries into contemporary Ireland. This incomparable writer does not remain silent on the current perils posed to human creativity by Artificial Intelligence. True to himself, he is not optimistic about our chances of success. Let us give him our pledge that we will not easily trade away the gift that is unique to each of us. Let us now give him our warmest tribute of regard and gratitude.

DOCTOR IN UTROQUE JURE
HELENA ANNA KENNEDY

Arcus universi moralis, ut pendulum, longum est, sed ad iustitiam inclinat.
(Martino Luthero propugnatori iurium civilium adscriptum)

Proxima candidata insignis, quam honorifice vobis commendo, studiosissima fuit rerum novandarum a pueritia, cum a parentibus optimis stirpis Glasguensis tam sapienter ac iucunde educabatur moribus iustis piissimisque, ut summo sibi proposito constituto societatis hominum adiuvandae—immo universi adiuvandi generis humani, ut plane videtur—iurisprudentiae studium suscepit, ut patrona periclitantibus intrepida succurreret ac iura omnia eorum defenderet, quorum iura neglegi aut violari manifeste videbantur. Constanti animo, opere indefesso, assidue iustam aequalitatem propugnavit defendendam legibus, institutionibus liberalibus, libellis contionibusque, quoquo denique modo repperi posset quo facilius omnibus persuaderet ut leges ad omnes pertinentes omnibus utiles esse deberent. Viginti quinque annis ab illo die fausto, cum patrona admissa est ad ordinem forensem, nobilissima e factione labori dedita intravit Dominorum Concilium. Quam multa ac paene insolubilia crimina tractavit! Ut unum tantum exemplum adducam, imperterrito patrocinio cives quosdam Hibernicos iniuste rei capitis damnatos a crimine absolvit atque a vinculis carceris pravissimi; at ipsa omnium eorum, quibus iniuria iudicii subvenit, nomina memoria tenet. Eadem constantia, eadem animi fortitudine, ubique adfuit, invicta permansit. Sed quid profero quae omnibus nota sunt? Nullam aliam, credo, invenietis quae, praeter munus cotidianum, simul Concilio Britannico praesideat, Institutum Iurium Humanorum moderetur, atque profugas eripiat a terra remota crudeliter bello vastata. Mirabilis eius vis atque alacritas oritur, puto, ab ipsa mulieris humanitate, quam sustinet fides iurisque imperium, ne quid detrimenti capiat vita cuiusque nostrum. Mulierum autem libertatem atque incolumitatem praecipue defendere solet ab iniquitatibus atque saevitiis. De hac re primo disserens acerrime negavit genus muliebre in culpa sceleris esse; viginti quinque annis interpositis, vehementius querebatur graviorem etiam iniuriam ignominiamque; postremo odium feminarum plane rogavit ut in quaestionem vocaretur: quousque tandem tolerabimus leges carentes iustitia? Haec pluribus modis societati periclitanti subvenit quam commemorare possim. Ex innumeris summis honoribus, et civilibus et academicis, quibus iure decorata est et in Britannia et apud exteras gentes, liceat mihi unius mentionem facere singulariter, dico emblema Societatis Philosophicae Regiae Guasguensis. Huius rei causa haec est: vere philosophum esse qui veritatem assidue quaerat, qui observantiam promoveat uniuscuiusque probae sententiae, qui denique reverendam colat pulchram hominum varietatem. Quarum virtutum exemplis certissimis datis, HELENA ANNA Baronissa KENNEDY maxime digna est quae sonora Senatus gratulatione admittatur Doctor in Utroque Iure honoris causa Universitatis Dubliniensis.

DOCTOR IN LAWS
HELENA ANN KENNEDY

The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.
(Martin Luther King, *How Long, Not Long*, 1965)

Our next distinguished candidate has been a reformer since her childhood, which she happily spent with her family in Glasgow. Social change was her dream, and she pursued the study of the Law determined to serve the community. We can truthfully say that the community this formidable woman has served throughout her life is Humanity at large. She has done so as an intrepid barrister, visionary law-maker, unfailing defender of the rights of all those whose rights continue to be ignored or violated. She has relentlessly spoken for equality through legislation, education, and communication, reaching widely through books and broadcasting, sharing her unwavering belief that the Law is for everyone and should be accessible to everyone. She was called to the bar in 1972; in 1997 she became a Labour Member of the House of Lords. In the twenty-five intervening years she dealt with impossible criminal cases – to name but one, the release of the Guildford Four at the Court of Appeal, after seventeen years of unjust imprisonment. But she remembers the name of each and every victim of miscarriage of justice whom she has assisted. In the past three decades she has been just as fearlessly determined, omnipresent, unstoppable. Who else do you know who can, alongside her day job, chair the British Council, direct the Human Rights Institute, and singlehandedly rescue refugees from Afghanistan? Her energy and optimism are rooted in empathy for humanity and in faith in the law, whose rule is “the need to protect the humanity of each and every one of us.” From the very beginning of her career she has fought for the release of women from inequalities and the protection of women from any form of violence. She famously wrote on the subject in her first book, *Eve was Framed*; twenty-five years later, the condition of women was even worse, and *Eve was Shamed*. She finally exposed *Mysogyny* as *A Human Rights Issue*, defining human rights as “the way of injecting justice into legal eco-systems”: what is the Law without Justice? This woman has effected change in more ways than can be mentioned. Of the innumerable highest honours, civic and academic, bestowed on her in Britain and abroad, allow me to single out the Medal of the Royal Philosophical Society of Glasgow. The reason is this. A person who so deeply seeks truth, knowledge and understanding, who promotes dialogue, diversity and dignity, is the most veritable and inspiring of guides. Such a person stands before you today, Senate of the University. It is an honour to proclaim HELENA ANN Baroness KENNEDY Doctor in Laws honoris causa.

DOCTOR IN UTROQUE JURE
HELENA THERESA PREJEAN

Spiritus Domini super me
evangelizare pauperibus misit me
praedicare captivis remissionem.

Illud scriptum erat in libro Isaiae prophetae, quem Jesus surrexit legere in synagoga cum primum venit Nazareth, ubi erat nutritus. De illo testem habemus Lucam evangelistam; et de hoc habemus Matthaeum, quo postea Jesus loquebatur de fine temporum, cum Filius hominis sedebit super sedem maiestatis suae, et ad discipulos dixit: “nudus eram et cooperuistis me; infirmus, et visitatis me; in carcere eram, et venistis ad me”. In temporibus nostris nemo ita reverenter munus suscepit sicut haec femina, soror HELENA THERESA PREJEAN, quae pro iuribus humanis semper pugnavit et poenam capitis vehementer damnavit ut totus orbis audiret. Soror congregationis Sancti Iosephi vocationi ab adolescentia obsecuta est, sed vere nova facta est primo cum operam dare coepit hospitalibus publicis Sancto Thomae dicatis in civitate Aurelia Nova. Nam paupertas et miseria et violentia loci aperuerunt oculos eius, ut intellegeret sibi faciendum esse secundum verba Iesu; nam ita Gratia operatur. Et experrecta est ad iniquitates, quae in terra sua natali erant et ultra, neque usque ad illum diem ipsa animaverterat. Secunda deinde conversio facta est, cum epistolas scribere coepit ad virum in carcere re capitis detentum, primum ex multis qui litteras et visitationes sororis piissimae acceperunt, sive rei essent sive, ut saepius, misere innocentes factorum ob quae morte damnati fuerant. Et cum eis loquebatur, vidit humanitatem eorum et eis valde miserebatur. Quinquaginta per annos poenam capitis repugnandam praedicabat, sanctitatem autem vitae et iustitiae defendendam, ne filii Domini Dei tamquam mortui in lugubri cella ambulantes videantur. Et verum documentum fecit, narratione fidelissima et postea simulacro movente memorabili, de primo illo viro, quem miserum ipsa viderat interfectum. Narravit postea de mortibus innocentium, qui saepissime iniuste damnati et interfecti sunt; perpauci autem in extremo tempore liberati palam ostendebant omnibus parcendum fuisse. Virtute ac perseverantia mulieris optimae sancta ecclesia Romana poenam capitis damnavit anno MMXVIII; quando, inquam, ceterae civitates, quorum plures sunt quam ut sine horrore recenseri possint, hanc pravitatem tandem abrogabunt? Soror sapiens solet dicere quod moribus nostris caecamur quasi erroribus, si iniusti sunt et improbi; ipsa vero vita spectatissima demonstravit mores improbos posse mutari, rectos defendi, et omnes fieri instrumenta summi boni. Hanc igitur vehementer commendo vestrae benevolentiae, aptissima laudatione adducta a sodale fidelissima pia sororis: “Haec est plane opera Dei, quae ad vitam pertinet dandam, non tollendam.” Sonorissimo plauso, quaeso, vobis placeat eam acclamare.

DOCTOR IN LAWS
HELEN THERESA PREJEAN

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.
He has sent me to bring Good News to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives.”

These are the words from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, which Jesus chose to mark the beginning of his ministry in Nazareth, the town where he was raised (Luke 4:18). Later he will say, in his own prophetic Judgment of the Nations: “I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me” (Matthew 25:36). No-one in our times has taken these words more seriously than Sister HELEN THERESA PREJEAN, the human rights activist who has raised her voice against the death penalty for the entire world to hear. She is a member of the Congregation of St Joseph, having answered the call very young; but the first life-changing moment for her took place when she started working in a public housing project called after St Thomas in New Orleans. The poverty, misery, injustice of the place opened her eyes to the need to act upon those words of Jesus’ (“This is how Grace works”, she says). She woke up to the profound inequalities that still existed in her native Louisiana and beyond, without her even noticing until that very moment. The second awakening came when she began correspondence with a man held on death row—the first of many to receive her letters and visits, whether guilty or, often terribly so, innocent of the charges that condemned them to capital punishment. She talks to them, she sees their humanity and she feels compassion. For over fifty years she has campaigned against the death penalty, in an uncompromising defence of life and justice. Her unforgettable book *Dead Man Walking* was the moving narrative of that first man whose life was taken before her, and that story reached every corner of the world through its powerful cinematic dramatization. In *The Death of Innocents* she tells of the many who were unjustly sentenced and executed, while the few who were saved at the last minute proved that a chance should have been given to everyone. This woman was part of the process that led the Catholic Church to condemn the death penalty in 2018. When will all other States – too many to recall without shivering – finally admit that the practice is just *wrong* and abolish it? She often says that “culture blinds us”, because of the ways in which prejudices can be disguised as values; but she has demonstrated with her life that culture can be changed and become an instrument for good. In recommending this woman for your warmest assent, I cannot think of a more eloquent statement than this, from someone who worked with her from the very beginning: “Helen’s is straight up God’s work: it’s about life and life giving, as opposed to life-taking.”

DOCTOR IN UTROQUE JURE
CATHERINA TAYLOR

Surge igitur, currum locupletem protinus apta;
Regina, o mea Musa, per auras ipsa uolabit.

Ludum athleticum iustitiae exercitium esse non dubito quin consentietis libenter, sodales, si animadvertitis omne certamen, omnes ludos cursus pugnas regi legibus aequis. Si forte cuiquam candidata propter iuventutem inusitatam vix digna videatur quae corona academica ornaretur, erret: coram oculis habetis athletam omnium fortissimam, praeclarissimam Hiberniae athletam aetatis suae atque omnium temporum pugilatricem. CATHERINA TAYLOR iure optimo illum titulum, aequitatis ac iustitiae vindicem, sibi vindicare potest. Comitatus amoeni de Wicklow in oppido maritimo nata ac nutrita, praedita ingenio ad exercitia athletica proclivi, a piis parentibus rudimentis optimae cuiusque disciplinae ludicae instituebatur ac studio fide constantia egregie sustentabatur. Pugilatum a prima pueritia sectari coepit, quamquam ludus ille in hac civitate nondum erat probatus. Quindecim annos natu (incredibile visu) cum primum certamen publicum anno MMI in Stadio Nationali inivit; innumeros deinde triumphos quindecim per annos consequabatur. Eam enim quinque coronis aureis ornatam vidimus in Certaminibus Orbis Terrarum Mulierum, sex in Europaeis et quinque in Unionis Europaeae; sed nullum emblemata aureum memorabilius fuit quam illud quod Londinii anno MMXII in Ludis Olympiis obtinuit in pugilatus classe levis ponderis. Gloria ac gaudium puellae vexillum Hibernicum ferentis, aureo emblemate decoratae elucet in praeclara imagine reditus apud aerodromum Dubliniensem. Ad pugilatum deinde mercede conductum anno MMXVI conversa, iam ab anno MMXIX princeps universa fuit in classe ponderis levis, levioris etiam ab anno MMXXII principatum obtinuit. Huic mulieri praevalidae tribuendum est, quod disciplina athletica comprobata pugiles feminae ad eosdem honores ac viri contendere possint. Qua in re ipsa exemplum virtutis praeclarum dedit atque imitandum. Puella tamen numquam modestiam praecipuam deposuit: nam de suis victoriis “Mihi pergratum est,” inquit, “quod Deus humiles eligit.” Equidem vero dixerim, poetae verbis usurpatis, eam exegisse monumentum aere perennius virtuti ac fortitudini Hibernicae. Si autem antiquitatem memoria repeto, primam Olympicam victricem invenio, Lacedaemoniam mulierem nomine Cyniscam, ineunte saeculo quarto ante Christum natum, quae in epigrammate epinicio sic loqui fingebatur: “μόναν δέ με φαμι γυναικῶν / Ἑλλάδος ἐκ πάσας τόνδε λαβεῖν στέφανον.” Haud dissimiliter de suis rebus gestis gloriatur candidata nostra; attamen penitus intellegit quid illae victoriae significaverint et patriis honoribus et omnibus athleticis feminis per orbem terrarum. Quod plane monstravit, cum dixit se semper optavisse ut in ludo suo excelleret emineretque, ac tantis laboribus tot annos susceptis iter quoddam feliciter aperuisse posteritati. Gratulamur igitur mulieri egregiae, acclamatione prosequentes dum coronam accipit academiae nostrae.

DOCTOR IN LAWS
KATIE TAYLOR

Go, the rich chariot instantly prepare;
The Queen, my Muse, will take the air.

(A. Cowley, 'The Muse', *Pindaric Odes*, 1-2)

You will agree, my friends, that sport is an exercise in justice: every game, every race, every fight is governed by rules of equality, fairness and impartiality. You have before your eyes a woman, perhaps the youngest ever candidate for an honorary doctorate in Laws, who for this very reason deserves the academic crown: KATIE TAYLOR, the greatest Irish sporting champion of her generation and female boxer of all times, can rightfully claim the third title of promoter of equality and justice. She was born in Bray, County Wicklow, with a natural disposition for sports – football, Gaelic football, camogie – and an immensely supportive family. She was barely out of childhood when, with remarkable passion and determination, she pursued boxing, a sport that was not yet sanctioned in this country. She was fifteen years of age when she fought her first official fight at the National Stadium in 2001. Her amateur career over the following fifteen years was literally paved in gold. She won five consecutive gold medals at the Women's World Championships, gold six times at the European Championships and gold five times at the European Union Championships; but no gold was more memorable than the one she obtained in the boxing lightweight division at the London Olympics in 2012. Her pride as bearer of the Irish flag shines through the iconic photograph of her smile on return from London to Dublin Airport. Turning to a professional career in 2016, she has been world lightweight champion since 2019 and super lightweight champion since 2023. It is to her credit that boxing obtained full recognition as a sport in Ireland, and that female boxers may aspire to the same glory and the same prizes as their male counterparts. In this, too, she is an inspiring hero. And yet she has never lost her characteristic humility: "I love the fact that God chooses the lowly ones," she once commented on her triumphs. What this woman has accomplished is an ever-lasting monument to Irish values and valor. The first female Olympic victor in history, a Spartan woman named Cynisca in the early fourth century BCE, thus speaks through the lines of an epinician epigram written in her honour (*Greek Anthology* 13.16): "I assert that I am the only woman in all Greece who won this crown". Our Irish champion is just as proud of her achievement, but is also deeply mindful of what those medals mean for her nation and for all women athletes across the world: "I've always wanted to be a history maker in my sport, and I just feel like all the sacrifices that I have made over the years is worth it. We're making the path easier for the next generation. And that, to me, is everything." I ask you to acclaim this unrivalled champion as she receives our brightest academic crown.