GENERAL NEWS

FAREWELL TO THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

In a number of ways during the last few weeks, the University has expressed its appreciation to the Vice-Chancellor for his contribution over the last ten years, and offered him best wishes in his new appointment as Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford.

A party was held in the Sports Hall of the Charles Wilson Building on 30 June, at which an early twentieth century tea set, bought with the contributions of members of staff, was presented to Mr & Mrs Shock. Speeches were made by Sir Robert Kilpatrick, the Chairman of Council, Dr Bowder, and by Mr Shock. (Extracts from the speeches will be published in our next edition).

At the degree congregations on 17 July, the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred on the Vice-Chancellor. Extracts from the address by the Public Orator, Dr Khan, are given below, and the orations will be published in full in a separate booklet.

After the afternoon congregation, Dr Shock presented to the University a portrait of himself by Dr Bryan Organ. The portrait was commissioned by the late Dr Mac Goldsmith, the University's former Treasurer, and hangs in the Council Room together with the portrait of Sir Alan Hodgkin by the same artist. Our photograph (courtesy of the Leicester Mercury) shows Dr Shock with Dr Organ with the portrait at the presentation ceremony.
Extracts from the Public Orator's address

"Almost by definition, Universities, being repositories of scholarship, need to be in a state of continuous expansion. That was the situation in this country until ten years ago. Then, for the first time in modern history, they were put into reverse gear by the Government. To move forward under these circumstances clearly requires some kind of magic, and that is just what this university has had under the very skillful managerial and academic leadership of our Vice-Chancellor, Maurice Shock.

"He came here ten years ago, just as the Medical School was starting, and saw the Clinical Sciences Building through. He helped to build up the excellent relationship which the University has enjoyed with the Local and Regional Health Authorities and with the City and County as a whole. Our greatest anxiety during his time here was how to emerge from the cuts in a state ready for the challenges of the next century. Morale was beginning to fall. There were difficult and prolonged Senate debates on restructuring. These he dealt with like a super grand-master playing simultaneous chess against sixty other grand-masters, all with their own complicated gambits. With his sharp incisive mind he could produce the answer to extremely difficult questions in the time it takes to change a pair of spectacles, a ploy which he exercised with an exquisite sense of timing. To deal with the cuts themselves he masterminded the implementation of an elegant scheme which was essentially one of gradual retirement for overworked middle-aged academics, relieving them of burdensome administrative chores so that they could round off their life's work for the benefit of future scholars.

"As his fame as a University administrator spread, it was natural that he should be in demand nationally. He was given the difficult job of being Chairman of the Universities Authorities Panel on salaries; he served on the Economic and Social Science Research Council; and soon after joining the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals he was being groomed to head it. He duly became its Vice-Chairman and then, until last month, its Chairman at the most difficult period in its history. He has ensured through his leadership that the Committee responded positively to the challenges facing Universities as a result of Government policies.

"It is remarkable that in spite of the negative environment of the last decade our Vice-Chancellor leaves us with a number of prominent positive monuments - including the Biocentre, sponsored industrially, which is his own personal achievement; the Fraser Noble Building for the School of Education; the new Sports Centre at Manor Road; efficiently run and well maintained Halls of Residence; the development of education in professional subjects. But the most important legacy of all is that he has built up the standards in this University so that it can hold its own with any in the world in the subjects that we do, and has thus secured our future into the next century.

"In honouring him today, we express our gratitude and warm affection with a permanent seal of membership."