
Doctor Honoris Causa Titles Awarded to Prof. Anthony F. Dixon and Prof. Peter Kurmann

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On Wednesday, the 20th of November, the Great Hall of Charles University hosted a ceremony to award honorary doctorates to Prof. Anthony F. Dixon and Prof. Peter Kurmann. The event, which lasted a little over an hour, was carried out in accordance with the long-established rules and etiquettes of the institution. The bulk of the speeches, which followed the standard protocol, were said in Czech and Latin. The service attracted a great number of academics, students, politicians and representatives of a range of institutions. Amongst them were representatives of the Czech Parliament, the Swiss and the British Embassy. Professor Václav Hampl, the Rector of Charles University, was the main speaker of the ceremony.

It was the Faculty of Science that awarded Prof. Anthony F. Dixon, the first to receive the Doctor Honoris Causa title from the Rector of Charles University that day. Prof. Dixon was born in 1932 in London and carried out his most influential academic reports at the University of East Anglia in Norwich. Prof. Dixon developed some world-renowned theories in the field of ecology and is seen as perhaps world's foremost specialist in the sphere of ecology of insect pests. Moreover, his links to Charles University and the Czech Republic date back long before the fall of the Iron Curtain. A lot of his research was carried out in a laboratory in České Budějovice, which he visited on regular basis. Together with his colleagues from Charles University he encouraged students to participate in international exchanges between the University of East Anglia and our institution. Interestingly enough, in his speech

Prof. Dixon regularly referred to the political difficulties he came across while attempting to co-work with his Czech colleagues until 1989. Furthermore, he noticed how the Velvet Revolution had shifted life in the Czech Republic by 180 degrees. Prof. Dixon also underlined the fact that not all of the changes were for the better; unfortunately, he did not elaborate on that topic during his speech.

The second awarded distinguished guest, Prof. Peter Kurmann, received the honorary doctorate at the suggestion of the Catholic Theological Faculty of CU. Born in 1940, Prof. Kurmann acquired his academic titles at the University of Basel. The majority of his academic career was spent at the University of Freiburg in Germany. He has produced numerous publications on the history of art in Medieval Europe with a special focus on French and German speaking countries. Kurman also contributed to the study of problems of common European cultural heritage, including the region of Bohemia. Aside from the aforementioned University of Freiburg he has also been strongly affiliated with the College de France in Paris and Charles University. The honorary doctorate acquired at Charles University in Prague is the second one in his career after being similarly recognized by the University of Rheims in the year 2000.

The official part of the event concluded with a ceremonial exit of all the high representatives of the University who were present during the day to the accompaniment of the tones of Gaudeamus Igitur. Shortly afterwards most of the guests headed downstairs for refreshments previously prepared by the organizers.



By:

Jan Szyszko studies Geography at Trinity College Dublin. Originally coming from Poland and living in Western Europe (Luxembourg and Ireland) for 9 years, he thought he would profit from going back to live in his home region again. He enjoys studying in Prague and experiencing life in a new city and at a new university which he learns also through the internship with iForum.



Proofreading:

Elan Grug Muse is in her second year studying for a BA in Politics at the University of Nottingham, and is studying for a year at the Faculty of Social Sciences in Charles University, Prague. She is interested in international politics, music and literature, and was motivated to write for iForum because it offered a good opportunity to improve her journalism skills.