

## Ceremony of Graduation, 2 July 2005

Vice Chancellor, by authority of the Senate, I present to you this person upon whom the Senate desires you to confer the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

### **Norman Churchill Craig Sharp**

Craig Sharp is a veterinarian of international repute whose career has demonstrated excellence in the clinical, academic and political aspects that span veterinary science and Olympic athletics.

Educated first at Kilcreggan Primary School, then Kent Road Primary, Glasgow, and Morrison's Academy, Crieff, Craig studied Veterinary Medicine at this University, tutored in undergraduate physiology by the then aspiring Nobel Laureate James Black. Following graduation and spells in veterinary practice in Scotland and Wales, obviously inspired by his student experience, Craig returned to Sir James Black's department as an assistant lecturer at the Veterinary School, between 1956 and 1958.

Moving into the field of immunopathology and working with another of our alumni and honorary graduates, Bill Jarrett, Craig developed his career and spent a period in East Africa where he was responsible for veterinary pathology. It was during this time that he contributed to veterinary care at the Nairobi Game Park Animal Orphanage, as well as to teaching and research in the Veterinary School, newly established in Nairobi by Faculty members of this University. Vice Chancellor, it would be quite possible for me to elaborate on the several aspects of Craig's veterinary contributions that would, themselves, constitute sufficient grounds for the honour I ask you to bestow: it is of note that the honour to which I refer is not a degree of veterinary science.

There was to be a significant change in focus for Craig upon his return to the United Kingdom. Always interested in sports and performance physiology, he was appointed to the inaugural Lectureship in Sport and Exercise Physiology at the University of Birmingham in 1971. This was a seminal event and it was to lay the foundation that

would lead to Craig Sharp being referred to as, arguably, the founder of sports science as we know it in this country.

The appointments and accolades soon followed. He was founder and Director of the Birmingham University Human Motor Performance Laboratory, and over the following decade initiated physiological testing in ten Olympic Sports Squads. In 1987, he collaborated with Dr Mark Harries in setting up the British Olympic Medical Centre at Northwick Park Hospital, Harrow, where he became director. In 1992 he was appointed to the first Chair of Sports Science at the University of Limerick's Department of Physical Education and Sports Science, and obviously still mindful of his veterinary roots, he retained duties in the International Equine Institute. The following year he was elected the First Fellow of the British Association of Sport and Exercise Science. In 1994, Craig was appointed to the Chair of Sports Science, Brunel University, and elected a Fellow of the Physical Education Association of the UK.

Towards the end of the last century, it is obvious to anybody surveying Craig's CV that he was, and has remained, one of the opinion leaders in the international sports science world. He was appointed to the Athletics UK Policy Committee on Doping, the Physiology Steering Committee of the British Olympic Association, and was physiological adviser to many sporting associations. Appointed Honorary Professor of Sports Science at the University of Stirling, he was also awarded an honorary DSc by the University of East London for foundation work at a variety of hospitals and institutes.

In all this work, Craig published extensively and authored several books on topics such as Walking Physiology (1985), Exercise Physiology of Children (1991), Equine Physiology (1998), Physiology of Dance (1999) and Ageing and Fitness (2002).

However, beyond committee and academic appointments, perhaps Craig's biggest impact has been at the personal level and in this regard he has changed lives. He has been adviser to a large number of elite competitors, but worked especially closely with Jonah Barrington (six times world squash champion), Richard Fox (five times world K1 slalom champion), Audley Harrison (Olympic boxing champion 2000)

David Moorcroft (5000m world record-holder 1980), Sir Steven Redgrave (multiple Olympic rowing champion); as well as many of our most successful teams, including the British women's and men's squash teams, the GB men's hockey (Olympic gold in 1988), the British Gymnastics Association (since 1973), and, more local to our own University, Glasgow Rangers FC.

But why this career track? The genesis lies in Craig's earlier years. Always a keen athlete, Craig was school athletics track champion. GUAC Cross-country 'Blue' (and athletics colours), was Captain and later President of Glasgow University Hares and Hounds, and captained Scottish Universities Cross-Country Team. He also ran cross-country for Scotland as a Junior, and played squash for the West of Scotland and Kenya. While in Kenya, he acted as regular instructor at the East African Outward Bound Mountain School, at Loitokitok, Tanzania, on the slopes of Kilimanjaro, and broke the record for the running ascent of Kilimanjaro (19340 feet). In 1988 he was awarded the Dunky Wright Memorial Medal for research services to Scottish Athletics and, in 2002, the International Olympic Committee's prestigious "Sport and Wellbeing" award.

Global in outlook, international in impact, Craig has also deployed his own extensive knowledge to press the cause of children – for their individual development, as well as to provide, from amongst their number, the next generation of world-class athletes. Closer to home in recent times, his written submissions and impassioned oral presentations to our own university authorities led to Glasgow establishing the first degree course in Sports Science in Scotland; today, nine other Scottish institutions have followed this lead, and Glasgow has been awarded the maximum five star rating in the 2001 UK Research Assessment Exercise in this discipline. Craig's influence and encouragement were pivotal.

One might consider all this sufficient for any man, but Craig Sharp has other facets. He maintains an active interest in music, particularly jazz, and the arts; a keen Burns scholar, he owns several original Burns manuscripts, was the resident Poetry Critic on Radio Clyde in the 1970s and was mentioned in the 'International Who's Who in

Poetry and Poet's Encyclopaedia' in 1993. Few can claim to have merged art and science as successfully as Craig when he published on 'Poetry and Science', in Nature (2001).

Vice Chancellor, Emeritus Professor Craig Sharp, sportsman, sports scientist, man of music, man of letters, and veterinarian: in all these fields an enricher of other people's lives and a man on whom I now ask that you confer the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

**Professor Stuart W Reid**  
**Professor of Veterinary Informatics and Epidemiology**  
**and Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine**