

Graduation 2011

Acceptance Speech by Honorary Graduate Ignacio Duran Loera

Chancellor, Professor Frasier, Ladies and Gentleman, fellow graduates, I should start this with an apology. I was supposed to sing a song but the band got stuck in Clacton-on-sea. So, I want to express my deep appreciation and recognition to the University of Essex for this extraordinary honour that, of course, overwhelms me. My first visit to the University dates back to 1985 when I came to Wivenhoe for the first time, invited by Gordon Brother stone. This outstanding relationship has endured, as you can see, the rigours of time. Seems those long gone days, this friendship has been enriched, if I had the luck and privilege to meet Don Avis, Valerie Frasier and Joan Hardwood, very dear friends to my heart.

Year after year, with a flow of Mexican students, I came to the University, as the Minister for Cultural Affairs of the Mexican Embassy in the UK. And I came to learn and enjoy the enlightened atmosphere and to drink from the clear waters of understanding. Because I have always considered that at the end of the day, the real purpose of cultural policy is not only to promote and enhance the better knowledge of Mexican culture in this country but to share and understand Britain's expressions through cultural exchange. In this sense, few countries in the world defined themselves with such emphasis in terms of their cultural identities as Mexico and the United Kingdom, nothing more rewarding than to travel through the British landscape accompanied by the imagination and creativity of the men and women from Mexico. A journey made unforgettable by the many friends I met along the way, but I always came back to the University of Essex.

When one finds peace and the joy of learning that characterises this institution, when the world passes through difficult times full of noise and confusion and the threat seems so urgent that shuts out everything else from view, it's good to remember that universities are beacons where the clarity of thought and the affirmation of the location provide, light up the trust and determination that allow our spirit to speak. This University has greeted a variety of Mexican artists, writers and performers that find a meaning for the world through their art. They have shared many expressions that underscore the essence of Mexico. Valerie has told us a minute ago about the masked avengers wrestling in Colchester, sinister Mexican skulls, the day of the day offering and a tribute to Moque De Suma. But these artists have also enjoyed the collection of Latin American art. A work of love that gives the visitor the navigational chart to start out a voyage to Latin America, taking him or her to different latitudes. As it always happens they come back, carrying memories, colours and sounds of the different places they visited without even leaving this campus.

In closing, living now in Mexico City, I think it's fitting to bring back to memory the words that Lord Tennyson put in Ulysses lips when he goes back to his Island Ithaca. I quote "I am part of all that I have met, though much is taken, much abides". I thank, Lucilaine, my wife for walking along with me all these years, with the same joy and enthusiasm as when we first met. I thank my children and grandchildren for reminding me how amazing life is. And finally, profoundly, I thank the University for this generous and of course undeserved honour, thank you very much.