

## Oration for Mrs Judith Judd

Judith Judd is a great friend to the University of Essex. For more than a decade, she has demonstrated her commitment to our ongoing success, including in her role as Chair of our governing Council.

Indeed, Judith served full three terms as Chair, following nine years as a member of Council, only stepping down in 2019. Having joined us in 2010, as an 'external' member of Council, Judith also served terms as Pro-Chancellor between 2012 and 2018.

A history graduate of St Anne's College, Oxford, Judith has had a long, successful and respected career as an education journalist.

She started out as reporter and education correspondent for the *Birmingham Post and Mail* in 1974, and in 1976 she became news editor for the Times Higher Education Supplement. A move to the Observer came in 1979, where she covered religious affairs and in 1989 she began an 11-year spell on the Independent, where she covered politics and education.

She remained at *The Independent* as education editor until 2000, when she moved to the *Times Educational Supplement* as Associate Editor, with particular responsibility for the news and analysis sections. Promotion to editor followed in 2005 and then editor-at-large, as which she remained until 2009.

Throughout her career, Judith has been a passionate advocate for education. She was a board member of Whole Education, a schools partnership which promotes innovation and which believes all young people should have a fully-rounded education; and she was also a governor at Anglia Ruskin University until February 2006.

She continues to be a patron of the Education Media Centre, an independent charity set up to improve the public and media understanding of education research and

evidence, by helping the media to use academic and research expertise on the education stories they are covering in newspapers, on radio, TV and online.

Chief Executive of the Education Media Centre, and a friend and former journalist colleague of Judith's – Fran Abrams – says that Judith is *“the epitome of a good journalist; throughout her career she has always had an incredible ability to recall good, research-based evidence to back-up her argument.”*

Judith also has the gift of being able to communicate her knowledge of often very complex subject matter to a broad audience.

In 2019 she published a book, co-written with fellow journalist Wendy Berliner, called *'How to Succeed at School: Separating Fact from Fiction – what every parent should know'*. It is described by the publishers as: *“Using the most important research, studies and data which, until now, have largely been hidden away in academic journals, distinguished education journalists Wendy Berliner and Judith Judd are putting this vital information into the hands of parents and teachers for the first time, helping to answer the everyday questions they are often asked.*

*“This highly accessible and user-friendly book shines much-needed light on the facts, myths and burning questions that too often leave us confused and in the dark about key issues.”*

Following her retirement from journalism in 2009, in her role as an external member of our Council, Judith joined a number of important subcommittees, including chairing our Equality and Diversity Committee. And, many Essex graduands have sat exactly where you are now, as Judith served as our Graduation ceremonies' presiding officer in 2014, celebrating the hard work and success of our students as we are doing today.

She also continued to volunteer her time for the role when required, which we are truly grateful for and which, we think, she thoroughly enjoyed.

Since Judith's first involvement with the University, over a decade ago, she has demonstrated her Essex Spirit in both words and actions. She has contributed to bold decisions that have seen us become a top 30 University and University of the

Year 2018; achieve a 50 per cent growth in student numbers; become recognised as one of the top 15 institutions for student satisfaction for multiple consecutive years, and deliver multi-million pound improvements across our three campuses – while also continuing to expand our reach and reputation globally.

In her capacity as Chair of Council, Judith provided invaluable in her thoughtful leadership and support, and she wasn't afraid to challenge at times: specifically throughout the development of the University's strategic plan that is taking us through to 2025.

Judith has been a mentor to other governors and trustees, and has sought opportunities to develop relationships between members of Council, and foster a greater understanding of pertinent issues, thus enabling Council to operate with improved effectiveness and efficiency.

Judith is an asset to the University, and one of our most valued supporters. She demonstrates our values every day in her work: promoting excellence in research, striving for excellence in education; and she possesses a very enquiring mind, an unquestionable sign of the Essex Spirit.

We are delighted today to award Judith with an honorary degree, for her service, for her support, and for her friendship.

**Pro-Chancellor, I present to you Judith Judd.**