

Professor Ian Donaldson - Citation for Honorary Doctor of Letters

BA (Hons 1), Melb (1957); BA (Hons 1) Oxford (1960); MA, Oxford (1964).

Ian Donaldson, currently an Honorary Professorial Fellow in the School of Culture and Communication, has had an outstanding academic and professional career. He is also one of Australia's most energetic and effective champions of the importance and value of the Humanities. Over a long and energetic career he has been a Fellow and Lecturer of Wadham College, Oxford (1962-9), a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge (1995-2005), and has chaired the English Faculties of both these Universities. He was also Regius Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature, Edinburgh University, perhaps the most distinguished and certainly the oldest Chair of English Language and Literature in the world. Resigning his Oxford fellowship to return to Australia in 1969, he was Professor of English at the ANU and also Head of Department (1969-91). It was during this time that he founded the Humanities Research Centre at the ANU, established in 1972 as a national and international centre for excellence in the Humanities and a catalyst for innovative Humanities scholarship and research across the nation. Under Professor Donaldson's leadership, the HRC advanced research in the Humanities through a range of conferences, workshops, seminars and symposia, hosted under an annual theme. Its Visiting Fellowship Program was especially useful in bringing to Australia scholars of international standing who provoked fresh ideas within, and beyond, the academic community. In 2001, after returning to the United Kingdom, he established another highly successful research centre at Cambridge University, the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities (CRASSH). This Centre focused on interdisciplinary research via carefully managed and strategic research programs, producing annually over 400 events a year, with a special focus on the development of graduate students. A Fellow of the British Academy since 1987 and of the Royal Society of Edinburgh since 1993, Professor Donaldson was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities in 1975 and served as the Academy's President in 2008-2009.

In the last three years Professor Donaldson has produced two related publications, the culmination of a life-time of scholarly work: his authoritative biography, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), and his General Editorship of the Cambridge Edition of *The Works of Ben Jonson* (Cambridge: CUP, 2012). The Cambridge *Works* is a monumental achievement, a landmark publication consisting of 7 volumes and a vast, fully searchable electronic version roughly four times the size of the print edition, containing approximately ten million words.. The product of over 20 years of work, it has been praised in the *London Review of Books* as '[a] formidable enterprise' while the *Times Literary Supplement* has described it as an 'outstanding edition' and an 'invaluable scholarly resource'. The biography, *Ben Jonson: A Life*, has also been published to critical acclaim. *The New York Review of Books* states that Donaldson's 'deep involvement with Jonson scholarship and criticism ... is apparent on every page of this authoritative, elegantly written, and illuminatingly illustrated new biography' (April/May 2012), while the *Times Literary Supplement* pronounced it as 'an achievement that will be difficult to surpass' (17 February 2012). Terry Eagleton was also full of praise: 'A work of elegance and lucidity, which seems to say everything worth saying about its subject' (*Times Literary Supplement*, December 2011). The *Life* has received numerous critical accolades, including being short-listed for Britain's oldest literary award, the James Tait Black Biography Prize 2012, as well as the H. W. Fisher Best First Biography Prize 2012.