



Thursday, 21 June 2012, 11am
Steve Cordiner, Doctor of Technology

Laureation by Dr Sandra Cairncross,
Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries

Chancellor, it is my privilege to present Steve Cordiner for the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Technology.

Steve was born in and largely brought up in the Aberdeen area where he still lives. However his mother was a language teacher from the Czech Republic and part of his childhood was spent there.

On leaving Peterhead Academy in 1975 he went onto Robert Gordon's where he studied electronics and computing, graduating with a Higher National Diploma, and entered the oil and gas industry with the ambition of becoming a chartered engineer. This he achieved in 1995 via the Institute of Measurement and Control, of which he was a member.

Steve now has almost 40 years' experience in the oil and gas industry and has become a well recognised entrepreneur, businessman, inventor, professional engineer and consultant in that sector.

By the age of 40 Steve was deputy manager at one of the largest gas reception terminals in Europe. Whilst there, he helped create one of the most advanced gas gathering infrastructures, and personally developed the first automated control system for odourisation of UK natural gas. During this time Steve also married and he and his wife have two children.

While working at British Gas he collaborated for more than a decade with Edinburgh Napier University's Professor Bill Buchanan on innovative computer-related projects. That led to the award of an MPhil in 1997 for Steve's work on the optimization of turbocompressors. Steve serves as a valuable role model for his fellow alumni and this was recognised with the Edinburgh Napier Alumnus of the Year award in 2010.

The research which Steve's MPhil drew upon resulted in audited savings for British Gas and drastically reduced their Co2 emissions. This showed Steve's vision and led to a joint research award for the application of expert systems and fuzzy logic to the optimization of turbocompressors in order to reduce fuel consumption and Co2 emissions. Again this resulted in a great deal of success, and a number of publications.

At an early age, Steve spotted the potential for optimization in the oil and gas industry, especially in saving substantial amounts of Co2 emissions by using advanced computer control methods. He saw it as a business opportunity which could contribute to the growth of the Scottish economy and left British Gas in the mid 1990s to set up as an entrepreneur. He then co-formed Performance Improvements (PI) Group Limited. Some of his early work in PI was on the North Slope of Alaska, in Prudhoe Bay, which is an area of high environmental recognition, and came at a time when the rest of the world did not recognise Co2 emissions as an issue. Steve's vision foresaw the significant impact that the oil and gas industry was having on the environment and his entrepreneurial spirit meant that he took steps to address that issue.

In January 2009, Steve's company was sold to a FTSE 100 company. This also resulted in the creation of many other companies, all based on enhanced methods of optimization, novel computer control and on emission reduction. Steve had then planned to retire but his interest in and commitment to his work in the oil and gas industry has lead instead to part-time working of three days a week, allowing some time for other pursuits such as hill-walking.

Steve has been a leading proponent and visionary for optimization within the oil and gas industry, especially in promoting savings in Co2 emissions before it became a world-wide issue.

Chancellor, in recognition of his major contribution to the development of advanced software systems to significantly reduce carbon footprints and in creating a world-leading industrial base in Scotland, I invite you to confer on Steve Cordiner the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Technology.