

Text of the introductory address delivered by: MS CLIONA DE BHALDRAITHE MARSH, on 3 December 2008 in Dublin Castle, on the occasion of the conferring of the Degree of Doctor of Science *honoris causa*, on J. ANTHONY SCOTT

A Sheansailéar, a mhuintir na hOllscoile agus a dhaoine uaisle,

John Anthony Scott, otherwise commonly known as and answers to the name of Tony Scott, is an outstanding physicist, who had a stellar trajectory through UCD as a student, gaining a first class honours degree in Experimental Physics in his BSc achieving a joint first place in this examination. Awarded a postgraduate scholarship, he continued his research in Atmospheric Physics under the direction of Prof PJ Nolan achieving an MSc in '62 and his PhD in '66. He joined the staff of the physics department UCD in '62. Elected Dean of the Faculty of Science in '87 he served two terms. He was appointed by UCD as Director of Public Affairs in '89 and was instrumental in setting up the first office of Public Affairs in UCD, a post he carried out in tandem with his other responsibilities and duties. He served for two terms on the UCD Governing Authority from '88 to '94.



Tony's main area of research is in Atmospheric Physics with particular emphasis on aerosols and their role in atmospheric pollution, a topic now close to all our lives. His research involved examining ions in the atmosphere and the interaction between ions and aerosols – and a spin off of this work led to the development in the Physics Department of the ionisation smoke alarm which was put into commercial production with, I believe, over 40 million units produced to date. His other area of interest was on the structure of the human corneas with the Department of Ophthalmology. The National Science Council, the IDA, the EI company and the EU commission are among those bodies which funded his research. It is impossible in this short time to mention all his achievements hence I refer only to some of his achievements.

Tony is a Fellow of the Institute of Physics based in London and a chartered physicist and a chartered scientist. He served as Vice-President of the Institute and also as honorary treasurer. He is an honorary Fellow of the Institute - one of only 35 in the whole world. In 1999 he was awarded the Kelvin Medal of the Institute of Physics for his outstanding contribution to the understanding of Physics. He is also President of the RDS, a post he holds for three years; he was instrumental in reviving the Boyle Medal award (which dates from 1893) to be awarded on alternate years – in one year to an Irish scientist working abroad and in the other year to any scientist working in Ireland. A prize of €20,000 accompanies the medal.

All of you have heard of the Young Scientist Exhibition, now in existence for over 40 years. Not many are aware, however, that Tony was the leading person behind all this. It is very much in keeping with his retiring *personae* never to push himself into the limelight. His deep interest in physics and the promotion of science education led him to adapt what he saw in the USA - school science fairs - to Ireland and thus we saw the First Young Scientist Exhibition in January 1965. Tony also stressed the collaborative and non-competitive nature of this by using 'exhibition' rather than 'competition' in the title. The European Young Scientist Exhibition in Dublin followed. His example has been lauded in England. Sir Anthony Cleaver ETB decided after a visit this year to the Young Scientist

Exhibition and discussions with Tony that England would organise what it calls the Big Bang in March 2009 in London – the first of its kind in the UK- which is to become an annual Science event with “the profile and the impact of Dublin”.

Yet despite this high profile, Tony was very student-centred long before the word became common currency. He was always a great support for students; his door was literally always open. Students knew to whom they could turn; he very discreetly endeavoured in his various roles in UCD to look after that group of socially and financially challenged students by sending paid work their way - again he never boasted about this. He used to hold brief meetings in the corridor as his office was occupied by students doing a mail shot for him. This is very typical of this man who never sought any public acknowledgment for all his work..

In case any of you are under the illusion that Tony only breathes and thinks physics he has many other interests, which include being a member of the research ethics committee of UCD’s university teaching hospital at the Mater. He was also Chairman of the Council of Trustees of the National Library and has chaired many a government committee on various aspects of Science teaching and research; he was a member of the Board of St Luke’s Institute for cancer research.

Tony is Vice-Chairman of the Board of Governors and Guardians of the National Gallery - his other public link to the art world - his first is through his wife Pauline who is not only a well known artist but has just very successfully completed her time as President of the Watercolour Society of Ireland. His family are here with him today, Pauline his wife, his daughter Diane working in the world of finance, her husband Graham who works with SFI and I am sure that he and Tony have many a debate about Science Research in Ireland.

Dr John Anthony Scott truly deserves to be honoured by the university today.

PRAEHONORABILIS CANCELLARIE, TOTAQUE UNIVERSITAS:

Praesento vobis, hunc meum filium quem scio tam moribus quam doctrina habilem et idoneum esse qui admittatur, honoris causa, ad gradum Doctoratus in Scientiae, idque tibi fide mea testor ac spondeo totique Academiae.