



CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LISBON, MEMBERS OF THE
CHANCELLORY AND ADMINISTRIAL TEAM OF THE UNIVERSITY,
ILLUSTRIOUS GUESTS and NEW *HONORIS CAUSA* DOCTORS,
PROFESSORS AND STUDENTS, SIR PETER AND LADY ANN BELL

The Faculty of Medicine gladly accepts the awarding of the *Honoris Causa* PhD by the University to Professor Sir Peter Bell, a figure of great scientific and professional prestige, and whose action has been determining for the progress of Medicine and of Surgery of Diseases of the Vascular System.

In doing so, the Faculty of Medicine acknowledges and exalts the primacy of *Academic Medicine*, a need of the present and a challenge to medical schools and to the organization of health services themselves.

A year ago the editor of *The Lancet*, one of the most prestigious publications in our medical and scientific universe, stressed the need to resuscitate the *Homo Academicus*, particularly at a time when concerns of an economic nature, about productivity and competition at all costs are dominant in the organization of medicine, with the diminishing of the figure of the scholar, defined as the citizen of knowledge.

And this phenomenon has a negative impact on our triple mission: *to teach, to research and to treat*.

The academic dimension in medicine is based on scientific culture, on critical spirit, on mental independence and on a sense of public and social responsibility, and these will be, ladies and gentlemen, the crossbeams of good medicine.

They are essential to the seeking of knowledge, to the incorporation of innovation, to the defence of the ethical and moral sense of the profession. They are the attributes necessary for medicine to continue to be “the greatest benefit for Humanity”.

Professor Sir Peter Bell perfectly embodies all these attributes that qualify him as a true *Homo Academicus*. He combines professional excellence as a doctor and surgeon with intense research activity, which he has practised and stimulated, with a high sense of ethical, professional and social responsibility that together have granted his career an exceptional and exemplary dimension that we recognise and applaud.

Peter Bell was born in June 1938, and completed his primary and secondary education firstly in the Indian Army School and then in Sheffield, where he completed a degree in medicine in 1961 with honours.

All of his post-graduate medical training and surgical education took place at the Royal Infirmary, firstly in Sheffield and then in Glasgow. In 1968 he was awarded the prestigious Wellcome Travelling Fellowship, which allows him to spend a year at the University of Colorado Academic Centre in the USA, where he worked on transplanting with Thomas Starzl, one of the world experts in the surgery and biology of organ transplants.

In 1970 he defended his PhD thesis in Sheffield, with innovating research into Blood Flow of the Gastric Mucous Membrane, and two years later he was awarded the title of Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, in Glasgow.

in 1969, at the age of 38, he achieves the position of Consultant Surgeon, the highest point in the hospital medical career, at the Academic Department of Surgery in Glasgow, and in 1974, he became Full Professor of Surgery at the University of Leicester, where he has lived and worked since then.

He is married to Ann Bell, has three children and many grandchildren and is a happy man, indeed *blessed*, as one sometimes says.

At a time of rapid medical and surgical specialisation, Sir Peter Bell has been a master in his broad and all-compassing view of surgery, his professional interests have extended to endocrine surgery, to organ transplants and, finally to vascular surgery, and within this diversity he has been able to safeguard the essential unity of surgery. Since 1974 he has been Chairman of the Department of Surgery and Professor *in cathedra* at his university.

In all of these fields of his clinical work he continued, as I have already stated, intense research activity in the laboratory and in the clinic, bringing about dialogue between clinical medicine and fundamental science, indispensable to research into the nature and the advancing of scientific knowledge.

He has published six hundred scientific works, with particular relevance in the area of organ transplant up until the beginning of the eighties, and then, in vascular medicine and surgery, he was the author of numerous textbooks that are scientific reference works, and which over the years have brought him prestige and recognition in all of the geographic quadrants where surgical art and science are practised.

Some fundamental developments are due to the contribution provided by his group. Namely:

- Optimization of the results of carotid surgery in the prevention of cardiovascular accidents
- Standardisation of the methodology of clinical and functional evaluation of the techniques of distal re-vascularisation for the treatment of the critical ischemia of lower limbs
- Therapeutic innovation on the new frontier of endovascular intervention for the treatment of illnesses of the vascular system.

In 2002, in recognition of his exceptional merit, he was awarded a KBE by the Queen.

He was President of the British Society of Vascular Surgery and of the International Society of Vascular Surgery and of the Surgical Research Society, a member of the board of the British

and International Transplant Society and, over recent years, member of the council and then vice-president of the Royal College of Surgeons.

After the end of his public service he becomes Chairman of the British Vascular Foundation and President of the Hope Foundation for research into cancer.

This is, Chancellor and ladies and gentlemen, a brief summary of the CV of the man to whom we are paying homage.

There is another dimension in the career of Professor Sir Peter Bell: his deep intellectual generosity, his spirit of duty and an indestructible sense of humour, which, besides singling him out among the exceptional men I have met, means that socializing with him on a personal and scientific level is a privilege, an honour and ... a pleasure.

I met Sir Peter Bell in 1985, when we were both part of a group of European vascular surgeons who were fighting for the scientific autonomy of Vascular Surgery, and as founders of the European Society for Vascular Surgery, which has brought us together since then.

Sir Peter was the first editor of the new scientific journal, today the European Journal of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, and I was able to witness the qualities I have mentioned and which were determining for the success of this scientific undertaking. The commitment, readiness and scientific integrity he imposed upon those first editorial boards, recruited throughout Europe, were a mark of his leadership qualities.

We created a good friendship, and, allow me to state, complicity; we shared the same specific interests, namely in carotid surgery and on the current frontier of technological innovation that is endovascular surgery. It was sometimes in the solidity of his scientific concepts, in his capacity for analysis and to question the scientific bases of our activity and in his guidance that I sought support and guidance for some more complex and unusual clinical situations.

I had the privilege of succeeding him in the presidency of the European Society of Vascular Surgery in 1996 and 97, and his informed and experienced advice was fundamental for my performance in those functions.

Sir Peter Bell has accompanied and actively participated in the development of Portuguese vascular surgery and in its scientific institutions. Firstly, as a habitual presence at the international encounters that we have organized in Lisbon over the last twelve years, with the involvement of Portuguese vascular surgeons, and, since 2002, at the meetings of the Portuguese Society of Angiology and Vascular Surgery which was set up in the meantime. His critical spirit, the frankness of his positions and the commitment with which he has accompanied us have been decisive for the success of our scientific activities, and, along with his sense of humour, they will leave an imperishable memory with all of us.

Sir Peter, Ann

I have just presented the University of Lisbon **with** a brief **résumé** of your brilliant CV and the reasons why the Scientific Board of our Medical School **has** endorsed, by unanimous vote, the proposition of all the Professors of Surgery with a seat on that Board, to award you the *Doctorate Honoris Causa* **from** the University of Lisbon.

It has been a **real privilege for us** to have met you both and to have enjoyed your friendship and support.

And now, in Portuguese, and following protocol, I will request the Honorary **Doctorate from** the **Chancellor**:

**IN THE NAME OF THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LISBON, I
REQUEST THE INSIGNIAS OF DOCTOR *HONORIS CAUSA* FOR PROFESSOR *SIR PETER ROBERT
FRANK BELL***