

Dr Heather Melville, OBE, Hon DLitt
Thursday, 27 July, 2023, pm

Vice-Chancellor

Our honorary graduand this afternoon is an eminent champion of equality, diversity and inclusion in business, and Chancellor of the University of York. I am delighted to introduce Dr Heather Melville.

Heather is, of course, no stranger to University degree ceremonies, having just spent a week presiding over those at York. So I hope this afternoon's experience won't seem too much like a busman's holiday!

Heather has had a stellar career in corporate and international banking, finance, technology and professional services. In banking, she started with work experience in the Midland Bank and ended up as Director for Strategic Partnerships and Head of Business Inclusion at RBS (where she remained for 19 years). She has also worked as Global Bid Manager for IBM, and was sponsored through the IBM Business School, Hampshire, where, despite initial nervousness ('My peers had masters degrees. I had O levels,' she explains), she ended up as top girl. Most recently, she has been Director and Head of Client Experience at PwC and is currently Senior Managing Director with the global CEO advisory firm, Teneo, where she leads the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Practice. She was appointed Chancellor of the University of York in October 2022.

Throughout her long and distinguished career, Heather has worked tirelessly to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in business. She is passionate about the need for equal career opportunities for women and members of ethnic minorities, and has an enviable track record of building high performance inclusive teams across the financial and professional services sectors. She is a strong believer in the power of networking for women which she describes as 'supporting women to be the best they can as well as educating their male colleagues'. In 2007, in a pioneering move, she founded the RBS Focussed Women's Network; from small beginnings – when she personally provided the tea and coffee - this now functions on a global scale, with around 12,000 members in 33 countries, is integrated into RBS's strategy and is recognised as having played a crucial role in transforming banking culture. Heather is also chair of the Chartered Institute of Management's CMI Women, helping to develop the world's strongest pipeline of female managers and leaders. She is a patron of Women in Banking and Finance and was a principal speaker at its Future Leaders' Network launch last November; a member of the Executive Leadership Council – a global

network that works to increase the number of successful black executives both nationally and internationally, and a former member of the PwC Colour Brave Charity Committee. She has been an active champion for female entrepreneurs, partnering with local government agencies and industry specialist forums to support the growth of entrepreneurial businesses. She has personally mentored over 50 women in business. And she has recently been working with York University to promote doctoral study for graduates from BAME backgrounds, as part of the UKRI funded Yorkshire Consortium for Equity in Doctoral Education.

Heather's work has been recognised by a number of prestigious honours and awards, including, in 2017, an OBE for 'services to business and gender equality'. In 2019, she was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Portsmouth and in the same year was placed on *The Financial Times*' 'EMpower Top 100 Minority leaders' list, showcasing 100 BAME professionals from the UK and the USA. In 2021, she received the esteemed President's Medal for Leadership from the British Academy of Management. Heather is truly a trailblazer, an inspirational role model in banking and finance, helping to break down traditional barriers. It is a great pleasure to welcome her to Warwick today.

Vice-Chancellor: in the name of the Senate, I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*, HEATHER MELVILLE.