

Honorary Graduates Summer 2023

Sam Anderson

Doctor of Science in Economics for services to Business and Innovation

Samuel Anderson is the founder, Chair and CEO of IceMOS Technology based in Arizona and with operations in Belfast and Tokyo. He graduated from Queen's in 1983 with an MSc in Physics/Applied Physics and went on to qualify with a BSc in Electrical, Electronic Communications Engineering Technology from Ulster University and an MTech in Semiconductor Device Physics from Arizona State University.

Sam also founded Great Wall Semiconductor Corporation in 2002 as well as serving as VP of Business Development of ON Semiconductor Corporation and Director of Technology of Motorola, Inc's Power and Signal Products Divisions.

Sam and his wife Dr Fuyu Lin set up the Lin Anderson Foundation, a philanthropic organisation which supports research that enables education in energy savings and environmental progress.

Janet Graham Borba

Doctor of the University for distinction in the Arts

Janet Graham Borba is Executive Vice President of Production for HBO and Max at Warner Bros. Discovery, and responsible for bringing the award-winning global phenomenon Game of Thrones to Northern Ireland. Over the last decade, the production has benefitted the local economy by £250m and has stimulated the growth in screen tourism across Northern Ireland. Janet is a leading advocate for Northern Ireland as a centre for film and television production and her commitment has helped the industry flourish. Janet is a member of the advisory board for the Virginia Film Festival and has served as an adjunct professor in the MFA Peter Stark Motion Picture Producing Program at the University of Southern California.

Dr Brian Cheung

Doctor of Medical Science for services to Clinical Education

Dr Brian Cheung, from Hong Kong and now resident in England, has been a business professional for many years. His diversified business interests encompass provision of healthcare service, hospitality, properties and financial insurance.

Brian came to Queen's in 1982 to undertake a medical degree, having moved from Hong Kong a few years earlier to complete his secondary education in Belfast.

Brian is highly committed to supporting education and raising standards of healthcare in Northern Ireland and has made a contribution in the fields of medicine and healthcare.

Linda Ervine MBE

Doctor of the University for services to the Local Community

Linda Ervine MBE is an Irish language activist, educator and community worker from East Belfast. A strong advocate for promoting and preserving the Irish language across communities in Northern Ireland, Linda established a dedicated Irish language centre in 2012. The Turas Irish language project, based at the East Belfast Mission, offers Irish language courses and cultural events for both adults and children. She has also

worked to promote cross-community dialogue and understanding, using the Irish language as a tool for reconciliation. Linda's work has been widely recognised and she has received numerous awards for her contribution to language and community development.

Dominic Gates

Doctor of Literature for distinction in the Arts and Journalism

Dominic Gates is an award-winning Irish-American journalist, currently working for The Seattle Times. Originally from Northern Ireland, Dominic graduated from Queen's with a degree in mathematics, before forging a career as a maths teacher both in Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe. He relocated to the United States of America in 1992 where he began writing for various news publications. He has worked as an aerospace reporter for the Seattle Times since 2003. His reporting on the causes of the two fatal crashes of the Boeing 737 MAX and that jet's subsequent worldwide grounding won numerous awards, including the 2019 George Polk Award in Business Reporting, the 2020 Gerald Loeb Award for Best Reporting, and the 2020 Pulitzer Prize in National Reporting.

The Rt Hon Mrs Justice Siobhan Keegan DBE

Doctor of Laws for distinction in Public Service

Lady Chief Justice The Right Honourable Dame Siobhan Keegan is a highly respected judge in Northern Ireland. Having graduated from Queen's University with an LLB Honours, she was called to the bar in 1994. She later became a Queen's Counsel in 2006. She was one of the first two women to be selected as a High Court Judge when appointed in 2015. Lady Chief Justice Keegan was the Judge in Residence at the Queen's University of Belfast for six years from 2015 until 2021. In 2021, she was appointed as Northern Ireland's Chief Justice, becoming the country's most senior judge and the first woman to hold the position. Keegan's legal expertise and commitment to justice have earned her widespread respect and recognition, including a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 2020.

George Lowden

Doctor of the University for distinction in the Arts

George Lowden is a luthier who constructs steel and nylon string acoustic guitars by hand as well as solid-body electric guitars from his family-owned company in Downpatrick, Co Down. George most recently collaborated with Ed Sheeran to "get great guitars, made in Ireland, into the hands of kids."

During the pandemic, Lowden Guitars launched a community engagement initiative to encourage players of all levels and backgrounds to 'Stay at Home, Play at Home'. Supported by a range of musicians from Danny Jones of McFly to Foy Vance, it included a series of at-home concerts highlighting three iconic Northern Irish albums – Ash's 1977, Snow Patrol's Final Straw, and Foy Vance's Joy of Nothing.

In 2020, after 45 years of production, Lowden Guitars received a Queen's Award for Enterprise for International Trade.

Dr Martin McAleese

Doctor of the University for distinction in Public Service

Dr Martin McAleese holds an honours B.Sc. degree in physics from the Queen's University of Belfast and B.A., M.A. and B.Dent.Sc. degrees from Trinity College Dublin. He worked for many years as financial controller and company secretary with a number of Aer Lingus subsidiary companies before qualifying as a dentist and becoming a partner in a large dental practice in Northern Ireland. He is a former independent member of Seanad Eireann.

Martin served two terms as Chancellor and Chair of the Governing Authority of Dublin City University and recently completed his term as Chair of the PwC Ireland Public Interest Body. He is currently a trustee of the Edwards MacLiammoir Gate Theatre Trust (Dublin) and joint Patron of the 30% Club Ireland with his wife Professor Mary McAleese, former President of Ireland.

During his wife's two terms as President of Ireland Martin promoted bridge building between communities North and South particularly through dialogue with 'hard to reach' communities in Northern Ireland. He initiated a series of meetings with senior loyalist paramilitary leaders to pursue peace negotiations. These actions have been widely viewed as instrumental in bringing loyalist paramilitary groups to peace talks.

Dr Catherine McClay OBE

Doctor of Science in Engineering for services to Sustainability in the Energy Sector

Originally from Northern Ireland, Catherine moved to England where she undertook a degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering at Imperial College London followed by a PhD from St John's College, Cambridge. Catherine has worked in the electricity industry for over 20 years with previous positions including Head of Future Markets at the National Grid. Catherine is currently Director of Energy Operations and Flexibility at ENOWA, Neom where she is focused on creating sustainable energy solutions. In 2022, Catherine received an OBE for her services to the Energy Sector and the Promotion of Decarbonisation.

Paul Narain

Doctor of the University for distinction in Public Service

Paul Narain took up his duties as U.S. Consul General in Belfast in August 2021. He most recently served as Political & Economic Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Sweden. Mr Narain's previous assignments include service as Deputy Political Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan, and, prior to that, as Deputy Economic Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Greece. In Washington, Mr Narain has served in the Operations Center – the Department's crisis management hub – and on the Executive Secretariat Staffs of Secretaries of State Rice and Clinton. A career member of the U.S. diplomatic service since 2002, he has also served in Azerbaijan and twice in India.

Mr Narain has received several superior and meritorious honor awards. In 2013, he was awarded the American Foreign Service Association's Mathilda W. Sinclair Award for outstanding foreign language study. In 2018, he received the Department-wide James Clement Dunn Award for Excellence.

Mr Narain earned a Bachelor of Arts from Johns Hopkins University, a graduate diploma from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (Bologna Center), and a Master of Arts in conflict negotiation and international economics from Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy. He was the Department of State's National Security Affairs Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution from 2016 to 2017. Mr. Narain has studied Italian, Russian, Hindi, and Greek.

James O'Kane

Doctor of Science in Economics for services to Business and Commerce and Higher Education

James O'Kane is the former Registrar and Chief Operating Officer of Queen's, having worked with four Vice-Chancellors and four Chancellors during his 24 years at the University.

James played a leading role in the development of Queen's University as a centre of global excellence and a key driver in the growth of the knowledge economy in Northern Ireland. During his time at Queen's, until his retirement in 2018, student numbers grew from 13,000 to just under 24,000 and annual research grants increased from £10m to over £100m.

An accountant by profession, James has been a leading advocate of technology and knowledge transfer. He is a former Director of the Northern Ireland Science Park, Catalyst Inc, IRTU, Kainos and Qubis Limited, serving as the latter's Chair until 2022. He recognised the importance of the university's connections with business and industry and the link between world class research, innovation and wealth creation, as evidenced in successful start-ups such as Andor Technologies, Fusion, Titan IC and Kainos.

James also held a number of other non-executive Board positions, including the Royal Group of Hospitals Trust, Belfast HSC Trust, Association of NI Colleges and was the first Chair of Belfast Metropolitan College.

Stephen Prenter MBE

Doctor of Law for services to the University and Business and Commerce

A former Queen's student, Stephen has brought his significant corporate finance and business expertise back to the University via numerous key roles on the University's Senate, including Honorary Treasurer, Pro Chancellor and Chair of Senate. Stephen graduated in Economics, Business Studies and Accounting and began work as a graduate trainee in KPMG before setting up the Northern Ireland firm of global accounting network BDO which he led as Managing Partner for 20 years.

He has chaired Investment Belfast Limited, the Ulster Society of Chartered Accountants, Belfast Grand Opera House Trust, and currently Whiterock Capital Partners and has held various Director roles in business, arts and representative bodies including CBI and Ulster Orchestra. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland and was awarded an MBE in 2018 for services to Business, Arts and Education.

Sir Tim Smit

Doctor of Science for services to Environmental Conservation

Sir Timothy Bartel Smit KBE is a Dutch-born British businessman who jointly helped create the Lost Gardens of Heligan, and the Eden Project in Cornwall. He graduated from Durham University with a degree in Archaeology and Anthropology before embarking on a successful 10 year career in the music industry. Upon moving to Cornwall in 1987, he worked with John Nelson to restore the Lost Gardens of Heligan, not only revitalising the gardens but also the local economy around the area. Sir Tim is Executive Vice-Chair, and Co-founder of the award-winning Eden Project. He is also Executive Chairman for Eden Project International, which aims to have an Eden Project on every habited continent by 2025.

Nisha Tandon OBE

Doctor of the University for distinction in public service

Nisha Tandon, a leading social entrepreneur, has transformed ArtsEkta from a voluntary initiative run from her home into one of Northern Ireland's leading arts charities, and one of the only organisations on the island of Ireland promoting cultural diversity through arts, culture and heritage.

Nisha is the founder of the largest cultural diversity celebration on the island of Ireland, the Belfast Mela Festival which has grown from a one day festival at Botanic Gardens back in 2007 to a nine day event attending by more than 60,000 people last year. The Mela is now the a leading initiative that embodies the collective vision for a shared society in Northern Ireland.

Nisha was the first Asian women from Northern Ireland to be awarded the prestigious UK Asian Women of Achievement Award for contribution to arts and culture, and in the same month was awarded an OBE for services to the minority ethnic sector in the 2014 Queen's Honours List.

David Torrans

Doctor of the University for services to the Local Community

David Torrans is a publisher and bookseller. He set up the iconic No Alibis independent bookshop in Belfast in 1997.

The bookshop is considered a Belfast institution, hosting intimate music events and book launches, and runs its own publishing house, No Alibis Press. It provides a hub for artists to collaborate and preserve the ethos of the independent bookstore and the inherent value that No Alibis brings to the surrounding Queen's community.

David contributed to university outreach during the Covid-19 pandemic, helping to deliver 1,000 books to children in care as part of a project designed to improve the literacy skills of looked after children.

Sara Venning

Doctor of Science in Economics for services to Business and Commerce

Sara Venning is the CEO of NI Water. After graduating from Queen's, she began her career in Northern Ireland Electricity before joining NI Water in 2010, where she has driven both service and efficiency improvements, promoting the talented team, the

organization is recognized as one of Northern Ireland's top businesses. Sara has introduced a range of reforms internally, incorporating volunteering, public education, and sustainability endeavours across Northern Ireland.

Sara is President of the WaterAid Charity for the Northern Ireland and Scotland regions which work to transform lives by improving access to clean water, hygiene, and sanitation in the world's poorest communities. She also holds a non-executive role with the Electricity Supply Board.

Dr Alan Winter

Doctor of Science for distinction in Science

Dr Alan Winter undertook his degree in electronics at Queen's University Belfast, before undertaking a PhD from Queen's University in Ontario. He started his career with Canada's space programme in the 1970s before going on to manage and grow a number of successful tech companies. From 2001 to 2016, he was president and CEO of Genome BC. In 2018, British Columbia (BC) appointed Dr Winter as its first Innovation Commissioner to create new opportunities for BC tech companies, shepherd innovation across all industries and generate highly skilled jobs. In 2007, he received a Leadership Award from LifeSciences BC, and in 2017 he received the Don Rix Award for Lifetime Achievement. He is a fellow of both the Canadian Academy of Engineering and of the American Association for the Advancement of Science as well as the Canadian Astronautics and Space Institute.

Suzanne Wylie OBE

Doctor of the University for distinction in Public Service

Suzanne was Head of Urban Development in Belfast City Council before becoming Director of Health and Environmental Services in May 2010, then Chief Executive of Belfast City Council in 2014 – the first female to hold the position. During her tenure as Chief Executive, she led the creation and significant progress of the city's 20-year City plan, the Belfast Agenda. She worked closely with key stakeholders to secure a £1bn Belfast Region City Deal which has aided rebuilding and recovering the city in the wake of COVID-19.

Suzanne has been the Chief Executive for the Government of Jersey and Head of the Public Service since February 2022 and is due to take up the role of Chief Executive of the Chamber of Commerce later this summer.