

The Chancellor of the University of London, Her Royal Highness, the Princess Royal;

The Vice-Chancellor of the University of London, Professor Wendy Thomson;

Members of the Board of Trustees and of the Collegiate Council of the University of London;

Fellow Honorary Graduates;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

O Happy Day! I feel so genuinely happy.

I would like to thank the University of London, on behalf of my fellow Graduates as well, for the great honour which has been bestowed on us today. A short while ago you listened to generous orations in

respect of the four of us individuals, ranging in age from 30 to 83 years, from different walks of life, nominated and approved for these honorary doctorate degrees. I wish to express gratitude to the Orators for their kind words of introduction.

We join a group of distinguished personalities who have been similarly honoured by this great University in the past; esteemed company which should make us feel extremely favoured. I refer for example to a name like President Nelson Mandela, who we in Africa consider as such a giant in the affairs of men. I feel a sense of deep humility that my name would appear on a list where he is also mentioned.

I personally owe so much to the University of London. My father, the late Justice R. S.

Blay, one of the Founding Fathers of my Country Ghana, who encouraged his daughters to reach for the skies in spite of the negative gender environment of the time, graduated from the walls of this very University nearly a Century ago. He must be dancing for joy in Heaven in celebration of this great honour bestowed on his daughter this historic day.

There is more. The University College of Ghana from where I took my first degree in 1962, was an affiliate of the University of London in my time. Because it was affiliated to the University of London, it awarded this University's degrees for 13 years until the College attained full University status, and began to award its own degrees. In that sense, I am a *bona fide* Alumna of this Great Institution. I feel a great sense of pride.

I am reminded of the Schemes of Special Relations under which the University of London nurtured many a fledgling institution elsewhere in the Empire, and in that way, trained many for leadership positions in their respective countries. The University of Ghana of which I am the first female Chancellor, taking over from the Late Kofi Annan, has even produced Heads of State, including the current President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Addo.

Her Royal Highness, the University of London left us with a solid foundation which enables us to continue to march on as the premier flagship University in our Country. It makes my work easy. We are grateful for that.

Today, the COVID 19 Pandemic has popularized Virtual Learning with appropriately developed digitalized technology. The University of London has strong performance in this space, greatly improving promotion of Distance Learning. This University played a pioneering role when maybe all that was available for the global outreach in the past, might have been rickety boats, the backs of horses and camels, and indeed by foot. Hearty congratulations to the University of London for its many achievements.

It is traditional to express gratitude to family and friends who have helped us along the way, to these prestigious Awards. Many might be here present with us today, including the High Commissioner of Ghana, Papa Owusu Ankomah, and we do recognize them all. In my case, half of

Ghana were willing to leave the warmth of Africa to face the chill of London, just to witness this Special Ceremony. I will extend your greetings to them, as I share images of this Wonderful Day.

Her Royal Highness, the Collegiate Council, Madam Vice-Chancellor. I cannot thank you enough. You have certainly brightened my twilight years.

May God Bless us All.