

## **The Honorary Graduand: Lord Michael Bichard**

The Orator: Professor Richard Bolden

### **Michael Bichard is to be awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Business Administration.**

Michael Bichard was born in Southampton where his father was a school caretaker. He studied law at Manchester (and subsequently social sciences at Birmingham) and began a career in Local Government in Reading. He became Chief Executive of the London Borough of Brent aged 32 and then became Chief Executive of Gloucestershire County Council. With considerable reluctance he left the county to lead the Government's Benefit Agency then responsible for £100 billions of public money. To his surprise he was appointed Permanent Secretary of the Employment Department when that post was, for the first time, advertised publically and then became Permanent Secretary of the merged Employment and Education Department shortly before the 1997 election. In that role he worked closely with the prime minister and David Blunkett to deliver education reforms which were the centrepiece of Labour's first term. In 2001 he decided to do something completely different and for the next seven years was Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Arts, London, the largest creative arts learning centre in Europe.

During this period, he also chaired the inquiry into the Soham murders; chaired the Legal Services Commission and the Design Council. He became the first Director of the Institute for Government in 2008 and is now Chair of the National Audit Office, the Social Care Institute for Excellence and the Shakespeare Globe. He was knighted in 1999 and appointed as a crossbench member of the House of Lords in 2010 where he is now a Deputy Speaker. He had lived in Gloucestershire on and off for 30 years and is now settled with his wife Gillian in Nailsworth. He has had contact with UWE since he came to Gloucestershire and recently agreed to chair the faculty advisory board for the Business School. He has been an active supporter of Manchester United for fifty years and is glad to see the end of the current season!

The Honorary Degree is awarded in recognition of Michael Bichard's service to Government.