

David Parker was born at home in July 1956 on Durham Road in Leadgate – just up the road – before the family moved to Durham where he spent his childhood: he is a “Durham lad”. He moved to Christ Church, Oxford, for his undergraduate degree and after a 2-year DPhil in Chemistry, moved to Strasbourg to work with Jean-Marie Lehn in 1980, who 7-years later won the Nobel Prize “for the development and use of molecules with structure-specific interactions of high selectivity”. He returned to his hometown in 1982 – aged just 25 – as a lecturer at Durham University and Tutor at University College and became a pillar of Durham Chemistry for the next four decades.

His family are North-Eastern people for the past 10 generations: lead miners and then coal miners; teachers and singers, with a common passion for music and sport. His 3 children and 5 grandchildren share these gifts.

David is a global leader in his field of science, particularly well-known for the design and synthesis of molecules that act as probes or sensors for various physical, chemical, and biological environments. Examples include molecules that can sense chirality – that is to say if a molecule was a hand, then it could tell if it was the left- or the right-hand – with wide-ranging applications to imaging in cellular and *in vivo* environments. They include molecules designed specifically to enhance the contrast in magnetic resonance to allow for selective imaging in Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scanners. And they include molecules that can sense the local temperature or pH within cells and offer readouts of these properties by luminescence or magnetic responses. His work has had profound and wide-ranging impacts on basic science through to medical applications.

David’s research has been recognised by many awards for both his Organic and Inorganic Chemistry. They include the Royal Society of Chemistry’s Hickinbottom Prize, Corday-Morgan Medal, Interdisciplinary Award, Supramolecular Chemistry Award, Tilden Lectureship, and Ludwig Mond Medal as well as other international awards including the IBC Award for Supramolecular Science and Technology and the Triennial LeCoq de Boisbaudran award for Rare Earth Science. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 2002, aged just 45.

David has been a loyal champion and ambassador for the University, Durham Chemistry and the field of Chemistry more broadly, notably through collaborative work in Italy and France. He served as Head of Department on two occasions and on the 2008 UK Research Assessment Exercise (REA) panel – the predecessor of REF. On a personal note, I would not be here today if it were not for David as he hired me 20 years ago. David has been an inspiration over the decades to many of us, attested by the fact that 36 of his former PhD students and post-doctoral assistants hold leading academic positions around the world. In late 2022, after over 40 years at Durham Chemistry, he took up a Global STEM Chair Professorship at Hong Kong Baptist University, where he currently runs a world-leading research operation.

Chancellor, I present Professor David Parker FRS to receive the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*.