

Hundreds of Worcester Alumni Return to Collect Honorary Award

Thursday, 06 September 2012

Almost 800 former students returned to the University of Worcester on Saturday 1st September to receive their honorary degree at Worcester Cathedral.

The special ceremony was to award those who earned an award leading to Qualified Teacher Status between 1946 and 1977 with a Bachelor Degree.

More than 1,200 former students of the University, including many members of the same families and couples who met while studying at Worcester, have received the honorary award either on the day or in absentia, in recognition of their contribution to education.

It was a momentous occasion, as the ancestors of today's University of Worcester filled the city's cathedral for the ceremonies. Great grandchildren and grandchildren sat and watched their grandparents take to the dais to receive their degrees from the University's Vice Chancellor, Professor David Green.

Among those 800 collecting their awards were Peter Ward and Edna Pugh (nee Watkins), who left the then Emergency Teacher Training College in 1949, over 60 years ago, and were once again reunited at this celebratory event.

Peter, who turned 90 this year, has very fond memories of the college where he met his wife Jean Ward (nee Rawlings). In 2009 they celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. Sadly, Jean passed away this summer.

Professor Green told the alumni that he was proud of their hard work, intelligence and perception that they had displayed, and said he had estimated that just those who had come to Worcester for the ceremonies have taught a quarter of a million children during their careers.



He said the present-day University still enjoyed outstanding Ofsted ratings for its teacher training, and it had also achieved excellence in other fields.

"None of this would have been possible without the strong foundations developed by the staff and students of the former teacher training college who gave birth to today's University," he said.

After the ceremony, the alumni gathered outside the cathedral, enjoying reunions with old friends and colleagues, before taking coaches back to the University for a reception.

Michael and Marion Symmons (nee Reed) met at the college in 1971. They first exchanged words at Rag Week and later got together at a Hot Chocolate gig in the College's main hall. Michael and Marion married while Marion was completing her final year and her college friend Marilyn Hurford (nee Jenkins) was her bridesmaid. This was their first time back to the former college, they now have six children.

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