

# The Honorary Graduand: His Honour Judge Stephen Roger Wildblood KC, LLB (Hons)

**The Orator: Emma Whewell**

## **Stephen Roger Wildblood KC, LLB (Hons) is to be awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws.**

Stephen was called to the bar at the age of 21, having graduated in law from Sheffield University. He practised in family law for 27 years from Albion Chambers in Bristol, the last 8 ½ years being as Queen's Counsel. He wrote his first legal textbook at the age of 34 and has contributed to over 20 legal textbooks since. He began sitting as a part-time judge at the age of 37 and was appointed as a Deputy High Court Judge in 2004. In 2009 he became a circuit judge and, for the first seven years after his appointment, he sat in Devon and Cornwall, hearing family, criminal and civil cases. In 2013 he was appointed as the Designated Family Judge for the five counties in and around Bristol.

Stephen has had a close connection with UWE Bristol for many years. Whilst at the bar he was a leading member of the local Family Bar Association and, together with the University, organised a number of lectures on family law issues for students, lawyers and the wider community. Since returning to sit in this area, he has worked closely with UWE on some of the many innovative measures that the University has put in place to assist students and those who need legal support. He has offered encouragement for the pioneering work of the University in helping litigants in person. He has written plays which have been performed with UWE's support, showing the social circumstances of people who find themselves involved in family law litigation. He has organised debates on family law issues and has helped organise conferences with the University.

Stephen has announced that, in November 2023, he will be retiring from the judiciary and, thereafter, will be working with the highly respected psychologist, Dr Freda Gardner, offering non-court-based dispute resolution for people who might otherwise find themselves involved in litigation in the Family Court. He believes firmly that all types of family litigation should be a last resort and that people, and organisations such as Local Authorities, should be assisted to find solutions through mediation and, if mediation does not resolve matters, arbitration. Stephen is keen to continue writing and directing plays, and to publish novels that he has written that relate to family law issues. He is very keen to continue to support the forward thinking and pioneering work of UWE Bristol.