

SALLY GREENGROSS: DCL

Mr Chancellor,

At a time when being an octogenarian is only the start of a modern mid-life crisis, then we have much to thank Baroness Sally Greengross for campaigning to increase awareness about the potential impacts of our growing over 40s community. "If 80 is the new 40, then it is not surprising that so many of my academic colleagues (as well as myself) sometimes act like teenagers."

Sally has redefined being an '80 something' and is an inspiration to us all. How often do you meet an active Chief Executive who shows no sign of slowing down in her 80s? Baroness Greengross is both President and Chief Executive of the International Longevity Centre – UK.

Sally Greengross has long been determined to improve perceptions of 'old people' important because perceptions can influence attitudes and thus behaviour of how we view and treat our aged society. A better appreciation of the needs that face us when we grow old and of those around us can help in developing policy so that resources can be tailored to better support our friends and relatives in the years ahead.

A leading campaigner, Baroness Greengross has successfully lobbied to change world views on the elderly. This she has done successfully for over 40 years.

In 1975, she joined Age Concern as their Deputy Director having learned valuable skills from a range of careers including being a linguist, industry executive, researcher and lecturer among others. Baroness Greengross went

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on to become Director General of Age Concern for 13 years between 1987 and 2000. Until the year 2000, she was joint Chair of the Age Concern Institute of Gerontology at Kings College London, and Secretary General of Eurolink Age. She is an Ambassador for the Alzheimer's Society, SilverLine and HelpAge International.

Baroness Greengross has been a crossbench (independent) member of the House of Lords since 2000 and co-chaired five All-Party Parliamentary Groups on: Dementia, Corporate Social Responsibility, Intergenerational Futures, Continence Care and Ageing, and Older People. She is the Vice-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Choice at the End of Life, and is Treasurer of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Equalities.

Baroness Greengross sits in the House of Lords and on various cross-party parliamentary groups. She is President of the Pensions Policy Institute and Honorary Vice President of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health. In December 2006, she became Commissioner for the Equality and Human Rights Commission. She holds honorary doctorates from eight UK universities and thus we are honoured at Newcastle University to add her ninth doctorate in this her ninth decade.

Named UK Woman of Europe in 1990 she was also awarded an OBE in 2003. When the then Prime Minister Tony Blair MP called her to offer her the peerage, after the call she had to ask her Personal Assistant to double check it was actually him. Baroness Greengross was presented with the British Society for Gerontology's Outstanding Achievement Award in 2008. She was a Commissioner for the Equality and Human Rights Commission from 2006-12, and honoured in 2011 by the United Nations' Non-Governmental

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Organisations' Committee on Ageing for her passionate commitment to shaping society in a positive way towards our future older generations.

Baroness Greengross was described to me by both her colleague David Sinclair and her daughter Gail Greengross as an inspirational role model. Gail shared how as a mother, she instilled in all four of her children a sense of social good. Always offering an open house, welcoming everyone, so much so that old friends of the four Greengross children stay in touch with Sally more than her own offspring.

Gail described her mother with such fondness that I feel privileged to have been entrusted with the stories I am about to share, if I dare. Sally was renowned for being liberal in her approach to raising teenagers, illustrated by the 'squatting episode' and a few more stories that perhaps to the relief of Sally or maybe the congregation, there is insufficient time to expand on.

As a mother myself and one who frequents many a rugby pitch, I smiled when I was told about the younger Sally Greengross who got herself in the local newspaper for selling the most ice creams at a rugby ground in Brighton. Sally's unstoppable quest to have fun is legendary, whether it is swimming in The Serpentine in Hyde Park at 6am when her children were little, dressing up for a party, mastering text and going completely digital even though she was ribbed by all the grandchildren for having the biggest TV in the world that she couldn't turn on for ages! Or going to the rugby with her son's inlaws, or at 81 hiring a personal trainer for a weekly session! Long may these adventures continue. Perhaps this is why she is still working harder than when she announced she would retire and her family are all wondering if they will retire before she does.

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In preparing this citation I asked Baroness Greengross what this honorary degree meant to her and she told me that Newcastle University has for many years been very important because it is home to many distinguished scientists working on age related research. Although there is not time to mention all, she spoke enthusiastically of Professor Tom Kirkwood who studies the fastest growing sector of our population, that is, those 85 and over. Sally also mentioned Professor Grimley Evans who led a teaching programme on ageing that became so popular. Newcastle University produced the highest proportion of British medical graduates actively seeking careers in geriatric medicine. I too came to Newcastle University based on its reputation for world-class research and we are truly honoured to have Baroness Greengross hold our University and its staff with such high regard. Thank you.

Before I conclude, let me share Sally's response when I asked how she managed to juggle so many demanding and worthwhile activities aimed at making a difference to the quality of life, our growing older population must face. In reply she alluded to a butterfly, that is, the need to be constantly moving from one challenge to the next. I would like to end this citation by saying if all our human butterflies were as selfless, beautiful and caring about the older generation as Baroness Greengross, then we have much to thank her for and to look forward to.

Mr Chancellor, in recognition of her outstanding achievements in improving the conditions for our future older generations, I present to you Sally Greengross, OBE, as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Civil Law, *honoris causa*.

Citation by Professor Selina Stead, 7 December 2016