



Honorary Graduates Lady Edwina Grosvenor and Jason Cook

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## Inspiring individuals awarded Honorary Degrees by Northumbria University

In recognition of their outstanding achievements, Northumbria University has awarded honorary degrees to 11 distinguished individuals at its summer graduation ceremonies this July.

Lady Edwina Grosvenor, a criminologist, philanthropist and renowned prison reformer, has received the degree of Doctor of Civil Law in recognition of her outstanding contributions to justice system reform.

A Northumbria University graduate, Lady Edwina has spent more than two decades leading change within the criminal justice system, most recently through the pioneering Hope Street project and her charity One Small Thing. Her work reflects a deep commitment to trauma-informed support for women and children in the justice system, and she continues to influence national policy as a member of the Women's Justice Board.

Speaking about receiving her honorary degree, Lady Edwina said: "It is a great honour to receive this award from Northumbria University, a place where I feel fortunate to have studied. It inspired my early journey into justice reform and my time here gave me the academic grounding and encouragement to pursue a path that has always been driven by compassion, ambition, and a desire to do things differently and to create actual change in the world. To return and receive this honorary degree means a huge amount – not just as a personal milestone, but as a reminder of how education can inspire and lead to real-world action."

Jason Cook, a celebrated comedian, writer, and charity founder, has been awarded the degree of Doctor of Letters for his exceptional career in comedy and his ongoing support of creative talent and charitable initiatives in the North East.

Best known for creating the BBC comedy *Hebburn* and founding the regionally rooted Schnoobert Productions, Jason is also the founder of the Laffs4Kids charity, which has collected over 100,000 Christmas gifts for disadvantaged children through an annual arena comedy show.

On receiving his award, Jason said: "I'm both honoured and humbled to have received this, it's something that I never thought I'd achieve in my silly little lifetime but I'm deeply thankful to the University for considering me."

Further notable individuals honoured at the July graduation ceremonies included:

- Dr Beverley Prevatt Goldstein, a pioneering academic and activist whose work has championed equality and Black history in the North East.
- Mark Henderson, a visionary leader whose transformative work

as Chief Executive of Home Group has reshaped housing and care across the UK.

- Nicola Elliott, an inspirational entrepreneur and wellbeing advocate who has transformed the wellness industry while supporting mental health, sustainability, and young innovators.
- Professor Richard Wilkinson, a pioneering social epidemiologist whose groundbreaking research has transformed global understanding of how inequality harms health and society.
- General Dame Sharon Nesmith DCB, a trailblazing military leader whose historic career has modernised the British Army and inspired a new generation, especially women, in defence and leadership.
- Robert Lemkin, an award-winning filmmaker whose fearless documentaries have helped shape global understanding and inspired a new generation of storytellers.
- Lucy Winskell OBE, a civic leader whose tireless work has strengthened regional partnerships and championed opportunity across the North East.
- Caroline Paige MBE and Craig Jones MBE, courageous trailblazers who co-founded the Fighting with Pride charity, leading transformative advocacy that has helped create a more inclusive and just British Armed Forces for LGBT+ service members.

Each year, honorary degrees are awarded to individuals who have obtained the very highest standards of scholarship, outstanding achievement, or distinction worthy of national or international recognition in their academic or professional field.

The honorary degrees were conferred during ceremonies held on the University's City Campus in Newcastle this July, alongside celebrations for the graduating Class of 2025.

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## UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally.

Two thirds of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from the North East region and go into employment in the region when they graduate, demonstrating Northumbria's significant contribution to social mobility and levelling up in the North East of England.

Find out more about us at [www.northumbria.ac.uk](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk)

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