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## **Northumbria University honours inspirational figures**

Leading figures who have made an impact in the justice system, racial equality and music will be recognised at Northumbria University, Newcastle, next week.

Police and Crime Commissioner Vera Baird QC, Baroness Howells of St Davids, OBE, and AC/DC's lead singer Brian Johnson will receive honorary doctorates during Northumbria's July graduation ceremonies.

Vera Baird QC graduated from Northumbria University's predecessor

Newcastle Polytechnic in 1974 with a degree in law after making her mark as a Vice-President of the Students' Union and editor of the student newspaper. She went on to forge an impressive career as a successful barrister, involved in landmark civil liberty cases including the Orgreave Riot trial, the first pregnancy discrimination case to get to the House of Lords and a series of Appeals which helped change the law of murder for women who killed their violent partners, including the seminal case of R v Emma Humphreys. She was elected Labour MP for Redcar in 2001 and served as a minister in the Labour Government before being appointed Solicitor General in 2007. She was elected Northumbria Police's first Police and Crime Commissioner in 2012, and continues to campaign, particularly around women in the justice system. She will be awarded her honorary degree on Monday (14 July) with students graduating from Business and Law programmes.

Baroness Howells of St Davids, OBE is an active campaigner for justice in the field of racial equality. In the late 1970s the Grenadian government of Prime Minister Eric Gairy appointed her Deputy High Commissioner in London, becoming Acting High Commissioner in 1979. She was elevated to the House of Lords in 1999 as Baroness Howells of St Davids, which refers to the parish in Grenada where she was brought up. Northumbria University teaches medicine, health and life sciences programmes in partnership with St George's University in Grenada, where Baroness Howells sits on the board of St George's University Trust in the UK. Baroness Howells will receive her honorary degree alongside students from Health and Life Sciences programmes on Thursday (10 July).

Brian Johnson, who was born down the river at Dunston, is the lead vocalist for AC/DC, one of the world's most successful rock bands. They have sold an estimated 150 million albums world-wide and their most recent tour, Black Ice, is claimed to be the third highest-grossing tour of all time. He will receive his honorary degree alongside students graduating from Engineering and Environment degree programmes on Wednesday (9 July).

The recipients of honorary degrees are nominated by the University's staff for their achievements, their links to the University - and for their sheer inspirational qualities.

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Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focussed, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our

courses go to [www.northumbria.ac.uk](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk)

If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at [media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk) or call [0191 227 4571](tel:01912274571).

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