

Doctor of Laws, honoris causa February 24, 2000

Treasurer,

W. G. Plaut

It is my pleasant duty to present to you and to this Convocation Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut, and request that you confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws honoris causa.

Early training in the law in Germany was cut short by Nazi persecution and was followed by rabbinical studies and ordination as a rabbi. Following service in World War II with the United States Army, he served in synagogues in the United States before coming to Toronto. His rigorous and searching intellect, his deep appreciation of the holy texts, and his elegant prose established his reputation as a religious philosopher and commentator. His scholarship was matched with a fierce and deep commitment to social justice, which led him to challenge both his own community and the larger civic community to meet the challenges of social injustice.

An uncompromising opponent of racism in all of its manifestations, he was one of the founders of Toronto's Urban Alliance for Race Relations, and served for seven years as Vice-Chair of the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

At a time when the Law Society has taken up the challenge of equity within the profession, it is fitting that we recognize a person who, because of his religion, was excluded from the profession and who has devoted his life to the goal of attaining equity for all. I ask, therefore, that you confer upon him, Treasurer, the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.