



Honoris causa

Josep Laporte

Dr Josep Laporte is awarded the first doctor honoris causa by the Universitat Oberta



The Catalan Government's former minister of Health, Education and Universities, and currently president of the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans*, Josep Laporte i Salas (born in Reus, 1922), became the first person to be made *doctor honoris causa* by the *Universitat Oberta de Catalunya* (UOC), on March 3rd 2003.

Laporte was awarded the honorary degree by the University's vice-chancellor, Gabriel Ferraté and by the president of the *Generalitat*, Jordi Pujol, for his contribution to the creation and setting-up of the UOC in 1994, after the Generalitat's initiative to create a more Catalan-oriented National Distance University (UNED) had failed.

The act was attended by leading members in the areas of politics and the *Ramon Maruller* award to Josep Laporte's sense of compromise "from the very trenches of politics, in politically high-risk departments such as Health and Education". Laporte recognised, in his own speech, that he had been "a lucky man for having been able to work along side some of the finest talents in the fields of Arts and Sciences, and for the fact that one of his failures, that of *Catalanising* the UNED, had turned itself into such a great success".

Vice-Chancellor Ferraté recalled both the initial contacts with Laporte during the transitional period and those times in which Laporte first asked him to head a project which was then called the Distance University. "It is only right to assert that the UOC exists today because of Laporte's determination and because of his receptiveness to new ideas. This doctorate is not the payment of a debt, but rather the release of all the gratitude that we owe him".

Jordi Pujol emphasised the political dimension of Laporte's career, and his contributions to the construction of the country; he recalled his work carried out whilst holding positions that were "vital to modern society, decisive for progress, for social welfare and for the cohesion of the country". In Pujol's view, Laporte was capable of foreseeing the decisive future factors and was able to generalise concepts such as that of territorial balance within the university world through the impetus of new centres such as those at Girona and Lleida.

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The high number of attendees, more than 200, made it necessary to install a big TV screen in the hall from where the event could be followed by means of a closed-circuit TV.



Councilor of Health and Family, Irene Rigau, and the councilor of Education, Carme Laura Gil were some of the authorities present at the event.



Rector of the UOC, Gabriel Ferraté, awarding the title to Dr. Josep Laporte.



The president of the Generalitat, Jordi Pujol, granted the UOC medal to Dr. Laporte.



Councilor of Universities, Research and Information Society, Andreu Mas-Colell, gave a commemorated sculpture of the event to the first doctor honoris causa of the UOC.



The event's conductor, Rosa Maria Cornet presented "OneZero Community v. UOC" a net.art creation that symbolizes the UOC's success.



The president of the Generalitat, Jordi Pujol, highlighted Laporte's contribution to the Catalanian development.



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