

Margaret Casely-Hayford named new Chancellor of Coventry University

The first black woman in the UK to be made a partner at a City law firm has become Coventry University's first female Chancellor.

Margaret Casely-Hayford is Chair of international development charity Action Aid UK, a Co-op board member and co-manages rap artist Kelvyn Colt.

She takes over the ambassadorial role at Coventry University from Sir John Egan, former BAA and Jaguar Land Rover CEO, who held the post for 10 years.

Ms Casely-Hayford studied Law at Somerville College, Oxford University, and was called to the Bar in 1983. She joined Denton Hall Law Firm (now SNR Denton) four years later to specialise in planning law, and in 1998 was made partner - becoming the first black woman to hold the role at any City law firm.

She was Director of Legal Services at John Lewis Partnership from 2006 to 2014, and was a Non-Executive Director of NHS England.

A Freeman of the City of London she serves on the Metropolitan Police Oversight Panel to investigate corruption and spent eight years as a Government appointed trustee of Great Ormond St Children's Hospital Charity.

She joins Coventry as it was ranked second in the government's national [Teaching Excellence Framework \(TEF\)](#), and will lead the university's work on corporate responsibility, social mobility and engagement with the local community.

Margaret champions the representation of young people, women and ethnic minority groups on boards of directors and is Chair of the advisory board of Ultra Education, working to develop young entrepreneurs. She will help ensure that Coventry's links to establish both businesses and start-ups continue to grow.

In 2008 The Black Power List named the Casely-Hayfords the most influential black family in the UK and in 2014 she was named Black British Business Person of the Year.

Ms Casely-Hayford said: “Coventry is an energetic university which dares to be different and where social mobility and inclusion complement a truly entrepreneurial spirit.

“It shares my commitment to equality of opportunity and I will be shouting out Coventry’s message that a university can be world-class while admitting talented students from a range of backgrounds.

“Helping people reach their potential and seize opportunities is more important than ever before as today’s graduates emerge into a highly competitive global marketplace.

“I am Chair of Action Aid UK, a charity which aims to get some of the poorest people in the world out of poverty and which considers feminism as having the power to help make that happen.

“Feminism is really about creating this equality of opportunity for everyone, including young men who are underrepresented at all levels of education.

“The role that Coventry plays in raising ambition and skill levels in our communities is one step to achieving that level playing field and it is wonderful to see how staff here empower students and give them the confidence they need to succeed.

“I am thrilled to be part of such a dynamic team at a time when we are bursting onto the world stage.”

Professor John Latham, Vice-Chancellor of Coventry, said: “Margaret’s passion for the responsibilities of universities in their communities as well as her business experience will make her an inspiration for current and future students here at Coventry.

“She will be a champion for social mobility in education and in the global workplace at the same time as she advocates Coventry’s own social and economic impact and we are very proud to have her with us.”

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