

Press Release

June 2009

MORE THAN A MILLION GOOD REASONS

Premier Benefactor meets students as David Wilson Library exceeds 1 million visits

The Premier Benefactor who gave millions of pounds to help future generations study in Leicester returned to see the benefit of his generosity and meet the students he has helped.

Industrialist David Wilson gave over £2m to the University of Leicester Library that now bears his name. His return will celebrate the fact that 1.5 million visits have been made to the building since it opened just over a year ago.

Foremost among the visitors were HM The Queen, who formally opened the David Wilson Library in December 2008, accompanied by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

Since its opening, the £32 million Library has won an array of awards, including a Civic Society accolade for architecture, and the Royal Institute of British Architects East Midlands Award for Architecture.

Librarian and Pro-Vice-Chancellor Christine Fyfe said: "The creation of the new Library is a major milestone in the history of the University for which we thank the David Wilson Foundation.

"Of all University buildings, the Library best expresses our values and aspirations. The Library is placed both physically and spiritually at the heart of the campus. In opening its doors to the academic community and members of the public alike the Library is the face of the University to the outside world."

David Wilson met students who have made use of the new facilities, in addition to Vice-Chancellor Professor Bob Burgess and Christine Fyfe.

Professor Burgess said: “The new David Wilson Library has transformed the University of Leicester’s campus and is a clear indication of our ambition for the future. There can be no doubt that the provision of such an outstanding facility went some way to Leicester achieving the *Times Higher Education* University of the Year award in 2008-09. It is also testimony to the high standard of provision that the Library has won so many awards since it was built.

“This could not, however, have been achieved without the support of the David Wilson Foundation which has given our students an outstanding resource and great opportunity to succeed in an increasingly competitive market.”

David Wilson, an honorary graduate of the University, said: The David Wilson Foundation believes strongly that there is no better start in life than the one gained from a good education.

“For this reason, the Foundation specifically supports projects which actively increase educational and training opportunities for young people. We are also very keen to help young people overcome barriers to access a good education and training – whether these are through hardship, confidence, disadvantage or inequality.

“This is the principal reason the Foundation offered to support the creation of the new University of Leicester Library which enjoys a central place in the lives of students and has a profound and lasting impact on their studies. I very much hope that the new Library will help all Leicester students aspire to do well both within the University and beyond in their future careers.

“The Library also is a flagship project within the University’s development programme and helps to place the University within the very top league of UK universities. I am delighted that the Foundation has been able to play such a significant part in the University’s development and I am proud to have been involved.”