

## **Raymond Mildmay Wilson Rickett**

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Excel·lentíssim i Magnífic Senyor Rector de la Universitat de les Illes Balears, Excel·lentíssims i Il·lustríssims senyors membres del Claustre universitari, senyores i senyors, tenc molt de gust de ser aquí avui vespre, no sols a causa del gran honor que m'atorga una de les grans universitats de l'Estat espanyol, sinó també perquè m'ha permès tornar a trobar-me entre els molts amics que tenc a Mallorca.

I first met your Rector in 1978 when, with a small group from Spain and the United Kingdom, we established the *Acciones Integradas* Scheme, which promoted joint research between universities in our two countries. This was a radical initiative which had to overcome considerable obstacles. We started with a budget of £40,000, which was allocated to a small number of Spanish and United Kingdom university departments. Now, 14 years later, the annual budget for the scheme is over £520,000 and nearly every university in both countries has, or has had, a grant to one or more of its departments allowing staff and students to travel between Spanish and United Kingdom universities and pursue joint programmes of research. Happily, the University of the Balearic Islands has had a number of very successful research projects financed in this way. These include work with Aberdeen University in social change, as well as joint European research in Law, Computing and Biology. Professor Nadal Batle's involvement with the setting up of *Acciones Integradas* and with the projects put forward by your departments has resulted in your university enhancing its research reputation both at home and abroad.

The University of the Balearic Islands has also achieved much success in its participation in the ERASMUS programme, which finances students from all over Europe so that they can take part of their degrees at institutions of higher education in other European Community countries. Those students who have come to the United Kingdom have performed well and have been fine ambassadors for Spain. Students have benefited both academically and socially from the ERASMUS scheme and are well received by employers in industry and commerce throughout the European Community. A wide range of subject areas in this university receive ERASMUS, COMETT and TEMPUS grants, including subjects of such economic importance as management and computer design. The latter involves not only Middlesex University in London, but also universities in Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. Oceanography, languages, genetics and computer animation are also offered jointly with a number of universities throughout Europe.

When I first came to Majorca I was impressed by the work of the university, but felt that, because of the reputation of the islands as a vacation centre, the establishment of a school of Hotel Management and Tourism would be a valuable addition to the university. This idea was accepted, resulting in my colleagues at Middlesex University working with the staff here in the development of new courses in Hotel Management and Tourism. I was pleased to be invited here to Palma to receive the first graduates from these courses at a ceremony in 1990.

As a former United Kingdom Rector and now as chairman of the Council for National Academic Awards, an organisation concerned with maintaining and enhancing academic quality in higher education in Great Britain, I note with much pleasure the success of the University of the Balearic Islands in its research and teaching programmes. I am also most impressed by the architecture of the new buildings and the design of the campus. As a good friend of the Balearic Islands, I have every expectation that the university will build on its success and, with the support of the Regional Government, will become one of the outstanding universities in Europe.

Em complau enormement rebre la distinció del títol de doctor honoris causa de la Universitat de les Illes Balears.