

## ***Honorary Doctorate Citation for Dr. Temple Grandin*** **Dalhousie University, 2015**

Dr. Temple Grandin is almost certainly both the world's most famous animal scientist *and* the world's most recognized person with autism. She turned the childhood pain of being different into a life of profound purpose, using her unique perspective to change the face of animal welfare and give hope and inspiration to millions of people and families living with autism spectrum diagnoses. Dr. Grandin has taught us by example that, as she says, "The world needs different kinds of minds to work together." Dr. David Gray, Dean of Dalhousie's Faculty of Agriculture, writes that Dr. Grandin "has been able to make sense of and articulate her unusual life experiences with rare depth... She argues that her contributions to the field of animal welfare would not have been possible without the insights and sensitivities that are a consequence of her autism." In 2010, Dr. Grandin was named one of Time Magazine's "100 Most Influential People in the World" in the Heroes category.

When Temple Grandin was diagnosed with autism at the age of two, her mother decided there was more in store for her daughter than a life of institutional care. She worked tirelessly to ensure that Temple had every opportunity to capitalize on her considerable abilities. That support, along with the mentorship of a high school science teacher and an aunt who owned a ranch in Arizona, enabled Temple to discover her affinity for animals and inspired her to pursue a career as a scientist and livestock handling equipment designer.

Dr. Grandin earned a B.A. at Franklin Pierce College in 1970 and, in 1975, an M.Sc. in Animal Science at Arizona State University for her work on the behaviour of cattle in squeeze chutes. In 1989, she was awarded a Ph.D. in Animal Science from the University of Illinois. Dr. Grandin knew from research and personal experience that, like her, animals think in pictures, have an intense awareness of change, and a fear of the unexpected. This understanding led to her ingenious designs for livestock handling systems that minimized the animals' confusion and fear. She has written, "Our relationship with the animals we use for food must be symbiotic". Today, half the cattle in the U.S. and Canada are handled in equipment Dr. Grandin designed for meat plants. In fact, her designs have been implemented worldwide. She also develops animal welfare guidelines for the meat industry and consults internationally with McDonalds, Wendy's, Burger King and many other companies.

Temple Grandin's compassion extends to the autism community, and she has dedicated herself to improving the lives of people with autism and to helping people understand autism spectrum disorders. Her unwavering belief that being a person with autism is a gift and not a liability has changed how we think about what Dr. Grandin calls the "specialist mind" and the promise it offers a rapidly changing world that demands ever more creative and detailed thinkers. Her book *Thinking in Pictures*, first published in 1996, is a foundational text for autism education.

Dr. Grandin has hundreds of publications to her credit. Her 10 books include *Animals in Translation*, a *New York Times* bestseller, and *Livestock Handling and Transport*, now in its fourth edition. She also wrote about autism in her books *Emergence: Labeled Autistic*, *The Way I See It*, and *The Autistic Brain*. Her list of over 70 awards includes the Meritorious Achievement Award from the Livestock Conservation Institute; honorary doctorates from McGill University, University of Illinois, Texas A&M, Carnegie Mellon University and Duke University; and the Double Helix Medal in 2011 from the prestigious Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory for communicating with the public about autism. She has also won prestigious industry awards including the Industry Advancement Award from the American Meat Institute and the Lifetime Achievement Award from The National Cattlemen's Beef Association. In 2010, HBO released a multi-award-winning TV movie about her life. Appropriately, she was inducted into the Cowgirl Hall of Fame in 2011.

Today, Dr. Grandin lives in Fort Collins, Colorado. She is Professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University and enjoys a thriving business as a consultant. Closer to home, Dr. Grandin has a special relationship with the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus. On two of her three consulting visits to Nova Scotia, she spoke to packed audiences at our ag campus. She's also a Graduate Committee member and External Examiner. And her book *Improving Animal Welfare: A Practical Approach* is on the curriculum of an animal welfare course taught in the Faculty.

No other person has had such an impact on the welfare of animals in agriculture; and few have done so much to champion and advocate for people with autism. Dr. Tarjei Tennesen of the Faculty of Agriculture says of Dr. Grandin, "She's not just an agricultural scientist. This extraordinary woman is a hero to very many people."

In recognition of her unwavering compassion for animals, and her tenacious dedication to helping the world better understand autism, I ask you, Mr. Chancellor, in the name of the Senate, to bestow upon Dr. Temple Grandin the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.