

MRS More Than Doubles Number Of Honorary Fellows To Celebrate 70th Year

Contributed by Market Research Society
Monday, 20 June 2016

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Market Research Society. With a recent report highlighting how market research has grown by 62% to £4.8 billion in three years*, the research industry is taking the opportunity to celebrate the growing significance of the sector.

To mark this important milestone, and demonstrate how pivotal research continues to be to both business and society, MRS is awarding Honorary Fellowships of the Society to six eminent public and business figures. These are individuals who have harnessed the power of research throughout their careers.

The awards will more than double the number of Honorary Fellows the Society recognises, making a clear statement about the global significance of research as the industry looks forward to the future.

The new MRS Honorary Fellows are:

• Bill Bryson OBE, whose writing has popularised the driving force behind all research: a compelling curiosity about people, places and things.

• Christopher Graham, for his stringent, fair and diligent stance on the collection and use of personal data throughout his time as Information Commissioner, which has been of immense value to the market research industry. He has also been of great support to the MRS Fair Data campaign.

• Rt Hon Dame Margaret Hodge MP, whose support for UK business – in particular SMEs and export opportunities – has been invaluable to the research industry during her tenure as chair of the Public Accounts Committee.

• Alan Rusbridger, for The Guardian's firm stance on personal data throughout his time as Editor, as well the role played in the publication's pioneering and innovative use of data analytics.

• Keith Weed, whose belief in an integrated approach to the marketing mix places insight at the heart of decision-making.

• Bill Schlackman, a qualitative pioneer who transformed the market research industry in its early days and helped to create the success we enjoy today.

Bill Bryson's Honorary Fellowship was presented on 15 March at the close of Impact 2016, the MRS Annual Conference. Margaret Hodge and Keith Reed received their Fellowships at the MRS Excellence Awards at The Langham, London, on 10 June. The remainder will be presented throughout the year.

The Rt Hon Dame Margaret Hodge DBE MP, comments:

"I started in research - my early days were working for a subsidiary of J Walter Thomson: EMRB [European Market Research Bureau]. I was there when they set that up, so it's very satisfying to see the circle come round.

"I feel very honoured, though I can't quite understand why they've given it to me! Maybe it's because I've always been very tough on actually using the evidence to determine how you do the policy and that isn't how a lot of people work. Public policy tends to be people that are driven by ideology or driven by conviction. And actually then the thing breaks down. You can have your convictions, but if you want to implement them well you've got to have it based on evidence."

Jane Frost CBE, CEO of MRS, comments:

"The decision to more than double our number of honorary fellows reflects both the pride we feel about the positive impact research has had over the years, and our optimism for the future. Our new honorary fellows are testament to the importance of high quality evidence and transformative power of curiosity and insight across a wide range of industries. From literature and journalism to public policy and marketing, it's clear that evidence really does matter. In our 70th year, we're delighted to be able to honour these individuals who have done so much to promote the value of research."