

PhD Pioneers: The Living Experiences of The Open University's First PhD Graduates

Oral History interview clip transcript

Name of Interviewee: **Dr Ken Richardson**
Interviewed by: **Elizabeth Currie**
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Clip 2

[00:21:05-00:22:44]

One thing doing the PhD had taught me was the value of scholarship, the really quite profound value of scholarship and that was what doing a PhD taught me, the value of scholarship.

That for silly reasons, really as the ground solved the foundations of civilisation, the basis of the enlightenment if you like was scholarship and science and the scientific method arising from that. So all of that interested me, the scientific method was very democratic, it really is. The process of sharing ideas, sharing results of conferences and papers and so on is all very important and I understand that. But unfortunately by the '80s and the '90s the value system had changed. I mean at a stroke Margaret Thatcher had made the income of universities not contingent on government grants, but contingent on student fees, the numbers of students they could get. So suddenly research products and courses became not vehicles of knowledge and knowledge creation, but just commodities basically to be bought and sold in a market system.

[00:23:44-00:24:01]

It's not, I felt it's not what I wanted to be doing, I wanted my freedom. So I took early retirement and since then I've continued working continuously, quite a lot with other people.