It is a great honour to be invited to pay tribute to Ken on this occasion - when, happily, so many of us are able to gather together in person for the first time in far too long. Many parts of the College community are represented here today, and the event has been timed to enable those on different work schedules to attend. The cycle and rhythm of the College day are complex, and people don’t always have a chance to be in the same place at the same time. Equally, the College community is made up of different generational cycles, which are perpetually renewed, to our collective benefit. Ken has had a very strong sense of the distinctive interplay of continuity and change, and of the importance of the work of building community afresh each day.

Modelling his own belief in the progressive and open character of which Wadham is proud, he has galvanised others - across the whole College community - students, non-academic and academic staff, alumni - to enact it and to feel involved. Building community requires effort and care - it doesn’t just happen. Ken has manifested this commitment in making lots of individual connections. The early risers will have encountered him with cup of coffee in hand walking round the front quad, or going to the upper terrace of the Bowra building to look at the new building coming into life. Attendees at Wadstock or the college symposium have been grateful for his participation later in the day. Ken has curated public discussion about human rights; has got to know alumni who disseminate far and wide the values of the college; has made time for everyone. This approach underpins his holistic understanding of the creative and supportive role of the Warden, which he has played so well.

The Access to Excellence programme, which he has spearheaded, embodies his passionate conviction that opening up to the widest possible range of voices inherently enriches the conversation. His important work within the university and beyond on managing the Prevent agenda has helped all voices to be heard. His maintenance of this strategic direction for the College has borne multiple fruit in supporting the pursuit of academic qualities, in positively valuing a culture of critical debate (and collective self-criticism); in developing our outreach and aspiration work; in achieving the construction of the two major interconnected buildings on the college site - the William Doo Undergraduate Centre and the LSK Access Centre - and the Dorothy Wadham building on the Iffley Road.

A few weeks ago, Ken chaired an online conversation between Amanda Levete, architect of the undergraduate and access buildings, and Neal Shasore, a Wadham History of Art alumnus, and newly-appointed Director of the London School of Architecture. The discussion articulated what a beautiful and transparent structure at the heart of the College could do to open up perspectives on the historic buildings - to revitalise and set up a stimulating dialogue with tradition. The William Doo and LSK buildings transform their surroundings, and are themselves transformed by their setting in a miraculously created landscape, which feels as if it has been there for ever.

It is appropriate that this farewell party takes place in another part of the College gardens, which have such a strong spirit of place. As Andrew and Michael demonstrate so well,
gardeners live in multiple temporalities, creating for now, for next year, for long-term futures which they will not themselves see. So in different ways does everyone who works for the College community. Ken has a profound sense of this process, and has been an inspirational leader in expediting it. We are deeply grateful to him, and will miss him very much. We hope that he and Linda will return often - to sit in the gardens, and to continue the conversation.

Dr Jane Garnett, Fellow and Tutor in Modern History