

“I can’t think of anyone who deserves this award more clearly. He was a brilliant minister, and the difference that he has made to scientific research -not just financially but imaginatively -has been incalculable.”

So said Baroness Warnock, moral philosopher and former mistress of Girton College, Cambridge, of this year’s winner: Lord Sainsbury of Turville.

Lord Sainsbury’s contribution to higher education has been rich and varied. His links to Cambridge are strong, beginning in his student days and culminating in his current role as chancellor. Inbetween are decades in which he emerged as one of the country’s leading philanthropists.

But it is for his time as science minister, from 1998 to 2006, and his 2007 review into government policy on science and innovation that he is perhaps best known in higher education.

Sir Steve Smith, vice-chancellor of the University of Exeter, describes the impact he had on the national research base as “transformational”.

“Lord Sainsbury was without doubt the most effective and supportive science minister for a generation. Not only was he completely committed to supporting the UK science base both in actions and in words, but he was directly responsible for two major developments.

“First was the 10-year science investment framework, announced in 2004, which increased by £1 billion a year the amount spent on the science base.

“Second, he produced the definitive statement of the role and contribution of the research base to the future of the UK. His report, *The Race to the Top*, is a stunningly impressive account of how research supports society and the economy. It remains as relevant today as it was when he authored it. He is a most deserving winner of this award: our research base has never had a better friend, and colleagues in all subjects from anthropology to zoology owe him their thanks.”