

Lord Dearing's landmark 1997 report on higher education called for a greater regional role for UK universities. This award goes to one the people who has most energetically pursued that vision – Professor John Goddard OBE.

During a career spanning more than 40 years, Professor Goddard “made an immense contribution to promoting the engagement of universities with their contribution to promoting the engagement of universities with their communities and in developing the concept of a university's regional mission,” said judge Sir Deian Hopkin president of the National Library of Wales. “An economic geographer, he founded and led for over 20 years the influential Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies at Newcastle University, where he was also deputy vice-chancellor with responsibility for the university's links with the North East.

Professor Goddard is an authority on the civic university. He led the 2007 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development review of the role of higher education institutions in regional development, and he has acted as an advisor to Universities UK, The Higher Education Funding Council for England and the government.

Professor Goddard was instrumental in forging the Universities for the North East partnership, developing Newcastle as a Science City and establishing the campus cultural quarter, which includes the Great North Museum. He also focused research efforts on three crucial challenges: ageing, social renewal and sustainability.

Although nominally retired since 2008, Professor Goddard holds a Leverhulme emeritus fellowship to complete a book on the university and the city.