I have the great honor to introduce you, our last Honorary Doctor, prof. Gilbert Laporte.

Prof. Laporte is full professor at HEC in Montreal and holds the Canada Research Chair in Distribution Management since 2001. Prof. Laporte did a bachelor in Mathematics at McGill University in Montreal, a Master in Operational Research in Lancaster University and a PhD in Operational Research in London School of Economics. He started his academic career in 1976 as an Assistant Professor in HEC Montreal, and became full professor in 1986 at the same university where he still is today. He is also a member of the leading Interuniversity Research Centre on Enterprise Networks, Logistics and Transportation (CIRRELT). Prof. Laporte has received many scientific awards including the Glover-Klingman Prize, the Robert Herman Lifetime Achievement
Award in Transportation Science and the Lifetime Achievement Award in Location Analysis.

It is difficult to underestimate the practical relevance, scientific impact and importance of prof. Laporte. In the research field of Transportation Science and Logistics, it is impossible not to reference to any of his papers. Listing all his contributions would take me too far given the time. The key focus of his work encompasses combinatorial optimization applied to vehicle routing problems, arc routing problems and timetabling, amongst others. What is the vehicle routing problem exactly? In this problem, we want to visit a number of customers, or drop-off points as efficiently as possible. The vehicle routing problem occurs for example in e-commerce order deliveries, or in retail store deliveries. A mirror problem is the arc routing problem, here instead of customers, arcs are visited. Think of garbage collection, mail delivery, snow removal, street cleaning, etc. This work has resulted in over 500 journal publications, with more than 40,000 citations.

Over the past years, our group had many ongoing collaborations with prof. Laporte via PhD students and research projects. Most of the joint work involves vehicle routing topics within a city logistics context. Clearly, this becomes more and more an important research domain, following, for example, e-commerce growth, an increased attention for sustainability and a high pressure on our scarce city infrastructure and resources. This is thus a fertile ground for interesting and challenging research, today and in the future.

For me, prof. Laporte is a fantastic mentor and a highly regarded colleague. He guided us in many many occasions and was always extremely helpful to work together on challenging, but very interesting, transportation research problems.

Prof. Laporte will remain to be involved the coming years in many of our research projects and will remain an important mentor for us
working in the field of Transportation Science and Logistics. Specifically, the aim is to jointly deepen and extend the current and future research on city logistics.

For our university, his role as Distinguished Professor will enforce our position as the leading university for research on city logistics, smart logistics, our strategic area Smart Mobility, and the Smart Cities Center.

Thank you.