

## **Introduction to PhD Pioneers exhibition**

**PHDC004X**

### **Lindsay O'Dell:**

I would like to welcome you to this exhibition which celebrates The Open University's first PhD graduates. PhD students were some of the earliest students at the university. The project, undertaken by researcher Liz Currie, supported by the Library and Archive colleagues, was designed to learn about the experiences of some of the first PhD graduates – including the first, Professor Neil Wynn in 1973, and others who graduated in the early days of the university. We were fortunate enough to find and interview 12 graduates, and have collected their experiences of studying for a PhD at The Open University and how it impacted their lives, through video and audio interviews.

The exhibition has been built using excerpts from the interviews with the 12 participants, and photographs they and others have kindly shared with us. The exhibition puts these in context with information provided from The Open University Archive, conversations with contemporary Open University staff, and historical records from the 1970s. You can view the full audio and video interviews by following links in the exhibition to The Open University Archive.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the participants for giving their time to this project, to enable us to celebrate their lifelong achievements. We're immensely proud of the doctoral graduates, who are pioneers of our current research degree programmes.