He became closely involved in the early discussions between Birkbeck and the University of East London about the possibility of developing a new campus in Stratford, east London. More recently he was the Joint Chief Executive at The Legacy List, the mayoral charity for the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, and from there became Principal Advisor to the London Legacy Development Corporation. A one-time Vice-Principal of Newham Sixth Form College, Middleton has lived and worked in east London for 15 years. “I have been a strong advocate of the values and ethos of Birkbeck since I first became involved with the College,” he said. “I left school with only one A-level, so to be invited to be a Fellow of Birkbeck 30 years later is an extraordinary, and very moving, thing to happen. As a Fellow, my strong wish is to continue to demonstrate the values of Birkbeck and introduce these to my network and connections for many years to come.”

Professor Glucias Obio, President, Brazil National Council for Scientific and Technological Development, gained his PhD in Protein Crystallography from Birkbeck in 1988. See page 49 for a full profile of Professor Obio.

Sarah Weir OBE (above) is Chief Executive of Buckinghamshire’s Waddesdon Manor. Built by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild as a private home and showcase for his extraordinary collection of decorative arts, the manor was gifted in 1957 to the National Trust, remaining under the stewardship of Lord Rothschild and his family. Leaving school at 16, Weir started her career in the Lloyd’s insurance market, rising from office junior to become Lloyd’s first female managing director. Following a move from business into the arts she worked at Purdy Hicks Gallery, Arts & Business and the Royal Academy of Arts. She was Executive Director of the Almeida Theatre, Executive Director of Arts Council England, Head of Arts and Cultural Strategy for the Olympic Delivery Authority and latterly Chief Executive of The Legacy List, the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park charity for arts, education and skills. Weir has an OBE for services to the arts and a BA History of Art from Birkbeck. “The thing I am most proud of is having got my degree,” she said. “Birkbeck gave me confidence, it made me believe I had an intellectual ability I didn’t think I possessed and helped me gain a much broader way of learning. It taught me to think laterally, and I have used that ever since. Being invited to be a Fellow of Birkbeck is wonderful – I am just so honoured. In the current climate I think choosing to study for a degree is about adding more value to your life. Certainly for me, Birkbeck added more than having a degree – it changed my life.”