

The Honorands of The 2008 Commencement

Peter Buck '52 Doctor of Humane Letters

Peter Buck is a nuclear physicist and philanthropist who is perhaps best known as the co-founder of the Subway franchise restaurant chain. A native of South Portland, Maine, he earned master's and doctoral degrees in physics at Columbia University. From 1957 to 1978 he held positions as a nuclear physicist with several companies. In 1965 he made entrepreneurial history when he loaned a seventeen-year-old family friend \$1,000 to open the first Subway Sandwiches and Salads Shop. This endeavor grew to two stores the next year, sixteen shops by 1973, and individual franchise sales by the mid-1970s. By January 2008 there were 28,773 Subway restaurants in eighty-six countries. He established a foundation devoted to enhancing the quality of life in communities in North and South America, as well as an endowment to support cancer research programs. He has a particular interest in the National Museum of Natural History of the Smithsonian Institution, and the Peter Buck Chair in Human Origins there fosters scientific research in paleoanthropology.