

Glasgow University Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science 2 July 2013 Roger Crofts

Statement by the Chancellor Sir Kenneth Calman

DISCE DOCE – learn and teach. And this is my charge to you today. While you might not want to do it all again as Livingstone suggested he might, you don't or shouldn't ever stop learning! Professor Crofts, our honorary graduate of today is surely a prime example of this sense of continuous endeavour. Some of you will know the famous quote from Mahatma Gandhi: 'Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever'.

Oration for Roger Crofts by Professor Anne Anderson, Head of College of Social Science

Chancellor, by the authority of the Senate, I present to you this person on whom the Senate desires you to confer the honorary degree of Doctor of Science: Roger Crofts.

Roger Crofts was born in Leicester on the 17th January 1944. He attended Hinckley Grammar School before graduating in 1965 with a degree in Geography from Liverpool University, going on to gain a Postgraduate Certificate in Education from the University of Leicester in 1996. In 1970 he gained the degree of M Litt from the University of Aberdeen for a thesis on 'Coastal processes and evolution around St Cyrus'.

After a brief sojourn as Research Fellow with the British Geomorphological Research Group at the University of London in the early 1970s, he made Scotland his home – and the focus of his wide-ranging professional achievements.

Roger's path has been to work in the public sector, chiefly as a Government adviser and administrator and as the leader of a major public body. He spent 17 years in the Scottish Office working on issues relevant to rural Scotland and particularly the Highlands and Islands. Over those years his brief included North Sea oil and gas, tourism, local government finance, sea fisheries, and law enforcement.

He was also the major architect of the policies and legislative proposals that led to the creation of Scottish Natural Heritage. In 1992, following stiff external competition, he was appointed to the role of Chief Executive of SNH, a position he occupied until his 'retirement' in 2002.

He is the author and editor of several books on Scotland's natural heritage and environment, including *Land of Mountain and Flood; Scotland's geology and landforms* (with Alan McKirdy and John Gordon) – which was nominated for the Saltire Society Research Book of the Year in 2007. His most recent work is *Healing the Land*, which focuses on reclamation and soil conservation in Iceland (2011).

His work has been recognised in elected Fellowships of The Royal Society of Arts (1997); The Royal Society of Edinburgh (2001), The Royal Geographical Society (2002) and the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2008). In 1999 he was awarded the Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in recognition of his contributions to environmental management. He has also been a visiting and honorary Professor at the University of Edinburgh.

Roger has a commendable record of service to voluntary groups and associations. Among many contributions he has been the Chairman of the IUCN World Conservation Union, UK and of Plantlife International. He served on the board of the National Trust for Scotland and also on the board of the Scottish Agricultural College. This year he sponsored the Roger Crofts Plantlife Community Conservation award, which will run for 10 years.

A wonderful companion at the dinner table, which he enlivens with his wit and inexhaustible supply of stories and anecdotes, he also lists his recreational interests as 'restructuring gardens', 'singing in private' and 'cooking without a recipe book'. Roger is a keen hill walker and photographer, and is much in demand as a speaker and source of pragmatic and creative arguments for environmental change.

Roger Crofts has a great fondness for and attachment to Dumfries and Galloway and to this Campus. He is a board member of the Crichton Carbon Centre and a regular contributor to and facilitator of discussions about strategic direction for the Campus. He is leading the establishment of the 'Dalry Bird Town' initiative, for which he is a tireless advocate and fundraiser. Very significantly, he chairs the Partnership Board of the recently designated UNESCO Biosphere for Galloway and Ayrshire and is leading it to charitable status.

In 1999 Roger appeared on the Scottish Television Programme 'The Buck Stops Here', talking about his role as Chief Executive of SNH. In a wide-ranging discussion, he noted at one point: 'I am a passionate believer that starting with schoolchildren, we can have an enormous impact on the stewardship of the environment'. In this succinct statement he showed telling foresight of some of the University of Glasgow's major teaching programmes here at the School of Interdisciplinary Studies in Dumfries.

Chancellor, I invite you to confer the honorary degree of Doctor of Science on Roger Crofts.