



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

DEGREE OF DOCTOR *HONORIS CAUSA*

Judith Mary Mackay

Laureation Address – Friday 1 July 2016

Laureator – Professor Raj Bhopal

Mr Vice-Chancellor, in the name and by the authority of Senatus Academicus, I have the honour to present, for the honorary degree of Doctor *honoris causa*,

Dr Judith Mary Mackay

Judith Longstaff was born in Yorkshire to a father she describes as a gentleman and a mother of fighting spirit. She graduated in medicine from the University of Edinburgh in 1966, and in 1967 she married John Mackay, soon moving to Hong Kong. There was nothing to predict that for some she was to become the 3rd most dangerous person in the world.

From 1967 to 1984 she practiced hospital medicine, attained the Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, and raised her sons Andrew and Richard. Influenced by her clinical experiences and by the late Sir John Crofton, Professor at this University, she entered the arena of tobacco control. Her warrior spirit was awakened by a tobacco industry booklet in 1982 denying the causal role of smoking in disease. In 1984 she entered the fight full-time, but unpaid. She directed the Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health in 1987 and in 1990 set up the Asian Consultancy on Tobacco Control.

She undertook an international tobacco control odyssey fueled by passion, anger and to quote Time Magazine, “a profound desire to do good for others”. Her method was direct: persuade leaders to enact the laws, policies, and strategies to tackle the legalized health terrorism of the tobacco corporations looking to exploit the vast markets of the East, especially in women.

She worked with the World Health Organization and the Union for International Cancer Control. She drafted laws and policies for governments in the Far East. This experience came to fruition in the most important health-related legislation of the 21st century: the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. She helped it evolve from a concept in 1983 to a UN Convention, which entered into force in 2005. 180 countries are legally bound by it.

She has been a prolific conference organiser and speaker, communicator with the media, and scholar, most notably authoring a series of landmark health atlases including one on



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

tobacco. Her honours include 13 major, internationally recognized awards including the OBE and the WHO commemorative medal.

In 2007 she was declared by Time Magazine as one of the 100 most influential people in the world and won the BMJ Lifetime Achievement Award. Her work has earned her respect globally, reflected in the following testimony:

- “She, more than anyone I know, has changed the future.” – Professor Michael Eriksen, USA;
- “Judith has been and remains a tireless friend and colleague for all who seek to end the tobacco epidemic.” – Professor Mike Daube, Australia;
- ‘I am grateful that Judith is tireless in supporting colleagues and friends in their work in effective tobacco control on their national level.’ – Dr Martina Pötschke-Langer, Germany; and,
- “Worldwide, Judith Mackay has achieved far more than any other tobacco control activist.” – Professor Sir Richard Peto, UK.

She gave us a brilliant lecture entitled ‘The War against Tobacco: from the lessons of General Sun Tzu to the leadership of Sir John Crofton.’ We heard why she is a dangerous enemy of the purveyors of disease and death. Luckily, she is our formidable ally and friend.

Mr Vice-Chancellor, in recognition of her immense contribution to public health,
I have great pleasure in inviting you to confer on Dr Judith Mackay
the Honorary Degree of Doctor *honoris causa*.