

GCU **ALUMNI**

Winter 2017

The magazine for graduates and friends of Glasgow Caledonian University

Murray Rowden

Alumnus Murray Rowden talks about his time at GCU and constructing a career in New York - Pages 6-7

Welcome to America

A first for GCU in New York - Pages 4-5

Welcome



Welcome to the 2017 issue of GCU's Alumni Magazine in what has been a landmark year for Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU). In a groundbreaking move, GCU is the first foreign higher education institution

to be granted a charter by New York State Board of Regents to become a degree-granting body in the city, and we were thrilled to welcome the first 16 students through the doors earlier this year. This year also saw the completion of our Heart of Campus project that has transformed our Glasgow campus by providing innovative new student spaces whilst contributing to GCU's sustainability initiatives.

In this year's issue, you can read more about these initiatives, as well as exclusive interviews with honorary graduates Anne-Marie Imafidon MBE and Brian Williamson. We tell you about how Sir Alex Ferguson CBE and his celebrity friends, including Walter Smith and John Hartson, managed to raise over £78,000 for the Glasgow Caledonian University Foundation.

You will also read about the successes that led five of our alumni to become Lifetime Achievement and Alumnus of the Year recipients in 2017.

Your University continues to be here for you so please do get in touch if we can help. We have created an online platform, GCU Connect, which enables you to connect with former classmates, hire or get hired, mentor or be mentored and expand your professional network. We also offer a variety of benefits on further study and venue hire, as well as corporate support for your business via CPD and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships.

We are extremely grateful to our alumni and friends who share their time and expertise helping to inspire our students, be it through guest lectures, placements or internships.

We look forward to working with many more of you in the year ahead.

Jillian Watt
Director, Glasgow Caledonian University Foundation, Alumni Engagement and Events
alumni@gcu.ac.uk

The Big Picture

Scots artist Gerard M Burns was on campus to exhibit his portraits of Sir Billy Connolly, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and the University's Chancellor, Professor Muhammad Yunus, alongside paintings of a host of celebrated Scots.



Contents

- 4 Welcome to America – a first for GCU in New York**
GCU given degree-granting authority in New York State!
- 6 GCU alumnus constructs a career in New York**
Murray Rowden discusses his time at GCU and how he is constructing a career in New York.
- 8 Highlights of the year**
An important year for the University at home and abroad.
- 9 Busy times at GCU**
Reunions and events in Glasgow, London and New York.
- 10 STEM formula equals success**
GCU honorary graduate Anne-Marie Imafidon on how to encourage girls to study STEM subjects.
- 12 Working with business is like being handcuffed to a rocket**
GCU alumnus Brian Williamson on how serious illness encouraged him to speed up rather than slow down.

14 Honoured by GCU

Leaders from health, philanthropy, engineering and STEM honoured at graduation ceremonies.



- 17 Making their mark**
Meet the recipients of GCU's Lifetime Achievement Award and Alumnus of the Year.
- 18 Impact in the field**
Meet GCU's new Pro Vice-Chancellor Research, Professor Cam Donaldson.
- 20 Beyond the joke: how comedy set me free**
Interview with Only an Excuse creator Phil Differ.
- 22 Should have gone to Glasgow Caledonian**
Exclusive interview with founders of Specsavers.
- 24 Celebrating success**
Industry recognition at national and international level.
- 26 Sir Alex Ferguson event changes the lives of students**
Celebrity golf day raises vital funding.
- 28 John really cuts the mustard**
We catch up with former Magnusson Award winners.
- 30 Making a difference**
ScottishPower partner with Advanced Higher Hub.
- 31 Banking on a brighter future with Santander**
GCU signs new agreement with Santander Universities.
- 32 Bringing our precious pictures back to life**
Scottish tech firm breathes life into old photographs.
- 34 Stay Connected with your University**
Data protection law is changing, opt in to keep in touch.

Written and designed by: Glasgow Caledonian University. Printed by: Sterling.
Photography by: Peter Devlin, Malcolm Cochrane. © Glasgow Caledonian University 2017.
Glasgow Caledonian University Cowcaddens Road, Glasgow G4 0BA Scotland, United Kingdom. +44 (0)141 331 3000 www.gcu.ac.uk

Welcome to America - a first for GCU in New York

In a groundbreaking move, Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) has been awarded a charter by New York State Board of Regents to become a degree-granting body in New York – the first foreign higher education institution to achieve this.

In New York, a city renowned for its global role in business and fashion, research indicated industry demand for the University's portfolio of research-based Masters-programmes in these subjects with a core focus on sustainability and ethical business.

Following the landmark decision in June 2017, recruitment began to the inaugural Masters degree in International Fashion Marketing and, despite the tight turnaround, Glasgow Caledonian New York College (GCNYC) staff found a very healthy demand for the programme and were thrilled to welcome the first cohort of 16 students to the programme in September 2017.

Recruitment has already begun for the 2018 intake which will include a further two new Masters programmes that can be completed in 12 months (full-time) or 24 months (part-time):

M.S. International Fashion Marketing
Sharpen your profile in the fashion industry by becoming an expert in 'profitable sustainability', and learn how successful global fashion marketing relies upon the right answers to questions of environmental and social impact.

M.S. Risk Management
Become a highly competitive candidate for opportunities in NYC and across the world. Launch or advance your career in risk management, risk analysis, risk coordination, insurance and business continuity management.

M.S. Social Business and Microfinance
With a Masters in Social Business and Microfinance you can be a part of real social change. Already a proven model for helping people out of poverty in

developing economies, microfinance is now expanding to the US and UK.

Commenting on this historical achievement, Principal and Vice-Chancellor Professor Pamela Gillies CBE FRSE said: "Glasgow Caledonian University is a special place. We are a forward-looking, socially entrepreneurial and truly international University. I am absolutely thrilled that we now have the opportunity to build upon our new research and business relationships in New York to deliver our unique programmes, which focus on fair fashion, fair finance and sustainability."

GCU alumni are eligible for a 10% discount on all programmes at GCNYC.

Sir Alex Ferguson shares his lessons in leadership at GCNYC

Sir Alex Ferguson CBE, Honorary Graduate and Founding Donor to the Glasgow Caledonian University Foundation visited Glasgow Caledonian New York College at a landmark stage of its development.

During his visit he took time out to deliver a Masterclass in leadership. Widely regarded as one of the most successful managers of all time, Sir Alex explored the theme of leadership indicating the links between effective leadership and long-term, transformational success.

The talk was moderated by Sir Michael Moritz KBE, a high-profile philanthropist, venture capitalist, and author who teamed up with Sir Alex to write the book: *Leading: Learning from Life and My Time at Manchester United*.

Sir Alex said: "I am a committed supporter of Glasgow Caledonian, a vibrant university which does important research and changes the course of many young people's lives. It is a huge pleasure to see the University take a step forward with the launch of Glasgow Caledonian New York College."



The MoMA's new exhibition.

Fair Fashion Center features in MoMA exhibition

The research of Glasgow Caledonian's Fair Fashion Center (FFC) is a capping focal point of The Museum of Modern Art's new exhibition, *Items: Is Fashion Modern?*

The exhibit features 111 items of clothing and accessories that have been instrumental in the 20th and 21st centuries, continuing to hold currency today. The FFC's process, known as The Quantum Redesign of Fashion, has been interpreted through the lens of the pieces in the exhibit, forming research data that was visualized by acclaimed information designer Giorgia Lupi. Ms. Lupi beautifully translated the information into an aesthetically compelling mural visualization design, extending over three walls. The exhibition will be open to the public October 1, 2017 through January 28, 2018.

"We are thrilled to be a part of such an important exhibition and conversation," said GCNYC Vice President and Fair Fashion Center Founder Cara Smyth. "We are so grateful to MoMA for offering a venue and space to celebrate fashion's history as well as the innovation of its future, including a shift in focus toward sustainability. Fashion is a microcosm of many industries, with vast links that span all the way from agriculture to the consumer. Correcting and healing the fashion industry will ultimately cure more than just its own impacts—it will provide a model for every industry to become a respectful and regenerative eco-system."



Pictured: Professor Pamela Gillies, Sir Alex Ferguson and Cara Smyth.

Constructing a career in New York

Alumnus Murray Rowden talks about his time at GCU and his career leading a major construction consultancy in New York.

What did you want to be when you were growing up?

Apart from the usual very young childhood dreams, I was always interested in creativity whether that be fashion or construction. I wanted to be part of creating things that would be there for a number of years that people would use.

What made you choose to study at GCU?

I was in a band and the older brother of one of the band members studied at GCU doing the course I elected to take. I had good Higher grades and I had the points to study at the “established” Universities but I wanted to study a vocational degree and they did not offer what I was looking for. I wanted to go into business and I got the sense that GCU would make me a good business person. It was a place that was grounded with an unrelenting focus on making graduates readily employable. I like that as both a person and now as an employer. I also love Glasgow as a city. I am always telling my colleagues around the world about the great people of Glasgow and that it is the No. 1 City in the world. I now live in New York which is No. 2, tied with London where I used to live!

What did you enjoy most about life at the University / what was your greatest memory of GCU?

I really enjoyed the mix of classroom and vocational study. At that time there were no halls of residence so I lived in a student flat in the West End. As a good number of my classmates lived at

home, my flat was always a great crash pad after a night out. I was the class social convenor and even if I say so myself, we had some great parties and events. It sounds slightly swotty but I must confess I loved the library. I guess all in all I enjoyed living and studying in the city and the people who I was blessed to have met and studied with.

What have you taken from your time studying at GCU?

I am delighted and proud to see how the University has grown but still holds to the goal of creating an opportunity for people and getting them into employment. My mission in life is to give people a chance and help them to realise their potential and ambitions. That is what we believe in at Turner & Townsend as we strive to create a great place to work. I learned that from a combination of my parents and GCU.

How did your career develop after GCU?

A GCU lecturer introduced me to Turner & Townsend and they employed me as a graduate. I have worked in our Glasgow, Leeds, Amsterdam, London and New York offices, moving through a number of leadership roles in the business, including leading the UK Infrastructure sector business unit (currently over 1000 people are in that business unit) and then I became the Global Head of Infrastructure working with our regions to grow our business in the sector. I was made a Partner of Turner & Townsend in 2000 when I was 32. I have also held industry positions such as Chairman of Constructing

Excellence a UK industry membership organisation. I am a great believer in not only making the business you work for successful but also contributing to the development of the industry you work in. I now have a dual role heading up Turner & Townsend’s Americas region as well as Global Head of Infrastructure. I am a member of the company’s Executive and Management Boards.

Can you tell us a bit more about your current position?

In my Americas regional role, I head up our business in North and South America. We have 20 offices in the region located in 7 countries. As the leader of the region, I am responsible for setting and executing our business strategy. In my role as Global Head of Infrastructure, I continue to support the other regions in growing their business in the sector. The Executive Board of the business ultimately set out our overarching strategy and deal with a range of matters such as admittance of new Partners through to mergers and acquisitions. I am based in New York although I travel extensively throughout the region and globally.

What led you to move to New York?

Three reasons. A priority in our business is to accelerate our growth in Americas and New York is the regional HQ. The second is that there is significant spend in the Infrastructure sector and my experience on projects such as Heathrow Terminal 5 and Crossrail in the UK, lends itself to helping the business capitalise on this opportunity.

And finally, we have a small Executive Board all of whom live and are based in the UK. We felt it was time for a member of the Executive Board to be located outside of the UK.

How is it living in New York?

I live in Manhattan with my wife Phyllis who I married straight after graduating from GCU. New York is a fun and intensive city. It is creative, a hive of energy and truly cosmopolitan. All the things that I love. It affords great opportunity for the services my company provides. It also has strong Scottish history and is very respectful of the influence Scottish people have played in the development of both the city and the USA as a nation. All in all a strong cocktail for fun and success on a personal and a business front.

Have you had a chance to visit our new campus in New York?

I have visited the campus. It is located in a great part of town and is a testament to the foresight of the University. I had the pleasure of being invited to lunch there with Sir Alex Ferguson and the great Scottish photographer Harry Benson. It was an honour and privilege to be in their company and to see the great work the University is doing. I am also a member of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and I was delighted to see work undertaken by GCU on display in an exhibition there.

What's next for Murray?

The growth of the Americas business is a project that has a good number of years in it. This role offers me further learning opportunity as well as personal fulfillment. I also see an opportunity to work with the University in New York to develop their presence here. I see there is a gap in the market for courses in Risk Management and Quantity Surveying. Beyond that, there is a big world out there but I do still see myself coming back to Glasgow at some point and in some capacity.

Looking back, what advice would you give your 18-year-old self?

I sought out guidance on what I should study and where I should study. That said, I had a strong conviction of what was right for me and I have never regretted that I selected a course that

offered me the mix of classroom and work experience. What I have subsequently realised is that the course you select is likely to offer you wider opportunity than you first think. I am biased, but to study in Glasgow is to study in the greatest city in the world!



Highlights of the year

Transforming the heart of our campus

This year marked the completion of our Heart of Campus project. Transforming our Glasgow Campus, the project has introduced exciting new elements to GCU's estate, including a 500-seat lecture hall and conference facility, a suite of stylish seminar rooms and a floor dedicated to Student Services, the Campus Life Lounge.

Other new facilities include a contemporary restaurant, a student-focused café and lounge, and a striking glass pavilion, which provides a defined point of entry to the campus. Outdoor space has also been revitalised with three landscaped courtyard gardens, while connections between buildings, and accessibility routes have been improved.



League tables and GCU

Times Higher Education ranked GCU with a position of '101-150' in the world's 200 under 50 Rankings 2017, which rates the world's best universities under the age of 50. It's the first time GCU has ranked and highlights the strides it has taken as an institution, particularly in research and international activity.

Our employability was also highlighted this year with more than



97% of GCU students in work or further study six months after graduation, according to annual employment performance indicators. The findings, which place GCU above the UK and Scottish averages of 94% and 95% respectively, reflect its industry-informed curriculum and links with employers.

Building capacity in South Africa

As the University for the Common Good, GCU extended its commitment to build capacity and skills in Africa as founding academic partner of the African Leadership College in Mauritius. More than 170 students have progressed to GCU-led honours degree programmes following completion of a foundation year.

The University has also signed a five-year strategic partnership to provide qualifications to employees of Transnet Freight Rail, South Africa's largest freight rail company. Sector-specific railway operations management programmes have been developed in partnership with the University of Johannesburg.

University hospital status agreed for NHS Lanarkshire

A landmark partnership between GCU and NHS Lanarkshire will bring benefits for patients, students and academics. The partnership will create three University hospitals and see world-

leading academics work alongside health staff to tackle key health challenges. Calum Campbell, Chief Executive NHS Lanarkshire said: "It is fantastic news for patients. As our population grows older, we need new ways of working to meet their needs. Partnering with GCU affirms our commitment to taking an innovative approach to improving services to address these challenges."

Educational opportunities for all

The University's Advanced Higher Hub is a widening access initiative for sixth-year pupils who achieved a pass rate of 88% this year. Four subjects achieved 100% pass rates. The initiative was shortlisted for a ScottishPower Foundation Award in the Education Partnership Category.



Busy times at GCU

We organise reunions and events throughout the year at our campuses in Glasgow, London, New York, around the UK and internationally, ranging from information receptions, masterclasses, class reunions and more. We can also help you to plan and arrange your own reunions.

Inspirational Alumni Speakers

Four inspirational alumni shared their career experiences with students, staff and graduates during a special event at GCU London. Supermodel Eunice Olumide, Global CEO of the Movember Foundation Owen Sharp, Entertainment Producer for This Morning at ITV Lisa Douglas, and Director of TBIAS Charles van Oppen offered valuable advice at this entertaining event.



Stars turns out for MA TV

Stars of the stage and screen joined an event to celebrate eight years of the renowned GCU MA TV Fiction Writing programme. Awards were presented for the best script and student, before successful graduates shared their own experiences during the evening at BBC Scotland. Stars of Still Game and actor Gary Lewis joined GCU Cultural Fellow, theatre legend Juliet Cadzow, at the event.



International Alumni Events

More than 200 alumni have attended reception events across the globe. Each offered an excellent opportunity to meet GCU staff and network with fellow alumni as business contacts. From South East Asia to Canada, former graduates shared their memories of student life and caught up with the latest news from GCU. Keep your contact details up-to-date for future invitations in your region.



GCU Afternoon Tea

GCU hosted an afternoon tea for alumni of founding institutions The Queen's College and The Glasgow and West of Scotland College of Domestic Science, affectionately known as the Dough School.

Alumna Helen Vass, winner of BBC's Bake Off: Crème de la Crème, treated 80 former students to her signature pastries. They came together to celebrate Dough School alumna Elaine Acaster's Lifetime Achievement Award for her services to higher education.



STEM formula equals success

From Child Prodigy to MBE and STEM Advocate, Anne-Marie Imafidon talks about her drive to encourage girls to study Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.



GCU honorary graduate and founder of award-winning social enterprise Stemettes, Anne-Marie Imafidon hopes the promise of fun, food and freebies will help revolutionise girls' attitudes to careers in science, technology, engineering and maths.

It was another F word – formulas – that attracted Anne-Marie herself to the field.

Anne-Marie, who has been awarded an MBE for services to young women and STEM, was just 11 when she became the youngest girl ever to pass A-level computing and at 20, she became one of the youngest women to be awarded a Masters Degree in Mathematics and Computer Science by Oxford University.

She said: "I was drawn to maths and IT from a young age, as I always wanted to understand how things - how formulae - work. I can never sit still, so it was a nice way to learn more and do more, whether it be maths or understanding different contexts and the logic of all things. With computer science, it was about the creativity, being able to make things and knowing lines of code.

"I got involved mainly through school, at least at primary level, as there were no external initiatives. Back then it was more about enjoying being on the computer at home on my own as opposed to through an organised activity.

"The older I got, the more external opportunities there were. I think it's fantastic that Glasgow Caledonian University is putting in the ground work to encourage girls into STEM. That's the hallmark of an organisation that is serious about trying to change the status quo."

It's about engaging and meeting people

Stemettes was established in early 2013 to encourage girls to careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics through a series of events and opportunities such as mentoring, workshops and conferences, and it has worked with around 15,000 girls and young women across the UK, Ireland and Europe. Around 95 per cent of them say they are more interested in STEM subjects after attending just one event.

"People have a misconception of stereotypical careers like mechanics or maths teachers, but the industry is actually quite diverse," said Anne-Marie. "Women in particular tend not to associate STEM fields with creativity and altruism but STEM is all about helping people and solving problems. You are able to be really creative while you're doing that, but often people assume creativity comes from the arts.

"There are five points we normally tell young women and girls when talking about STEM as a career. First, it's altruistic. Secondly, you generally get paid well. There is virtually no gender pay gap at the beginning. In fact, young women working in STEM on average get paid up to 30 per cent more than women not working in STEM fields.

"There's free swag! You get a lot of free stuff working in industry. You go to tech conferences and always get cool freebies such as games and music. There's free food! This is a big part of the tech-industry culture. Google, for example, always have free food on tap in all their offices. Bloomberg has a whole pantry, so even if you're just there for a meeting, there is free food everywhere. And, finally, you can generally wear what you want.

"We hope that all girls will be able to make informed decisions about careers in STEM so that eventually, women can be proportionally represented in the field, so that you have 30 per cent plus of the UK's STEM workforce being female, as opposed to just 21 per cent."

And for the Head of Stemettes, changing the face of STEM all comes back to those F words. "At Stemettes, our core formula has always stayed the same; everything we do is free, it's always fun and there's always food. It's about engaging and meeting people, and in five years, we have never needed to change that."

Working with business is like being handcuffed to a rocket

GCU alumnus and honorary graduate Brian Williamson tells Lynn McGarry how serious illness encouraged him to speed up rather than slow down.

// Being diagnosed with cancer was the best thing that could have happened to me," says Brian Williamson, a GCU alumnus and entrepreneur who has been helming successful businesses for more than three decades.

"It sounds strange," he smiles, "but, when you shake hands with death, it focuses what you want to do. You learn not to hang happiness on a future event such as retiring, but to find it in the here and now. That shift change in my mindset made me appreciate what I had, not what I didn't have and made me think 'what do I really want to do?'"

To his surprise, what he really wanted to do was not fast-track that elusive retirement "to play golf or watch TV", but to get hands-on in nurturing even more businesses.

"I don't see business as work. I like business the way someone might enjoy a hobby. However, one of my businesses – Jumpstart – was consuming a large part of my life," Brian says.

"Jumpstart is a business I met a few months after it started trading. It was a couple of guys in an attic flat with a fridge, a coffee machine and little else. Despite having little experience, no money and being at the start of a deep recession, I really liked the business and invested time, effort and money. Within two years, it was the fastest growing SME in Scotland and, in 2014, we secured investment in the business

valuing it at £12m, which was fantastic considering its humble beginnings.

"When I became ill, I realised, for me, that job would never be done, never be big enough, never be at the end of its journey to perfection. I looked around at other businesses and decided that there's a life of opportunity out there and I shouldn't be thinking how do I wind down, but how do I wind up. So, I embarked on a plan to recruit a new

You get sucked in, it's like a drug

Jumpstart CEO to allow me more time ... more time to build and grow other businesses. For me, that's fun."

Brian's professional journey began at one of GCU's founding institutions, Glasgow College of Technology, in 1973.

"My dad was a foundryman in Weir Pumps Limited (WPL), so engineering was in my family. I was interviewed by Weir and they suggested a Higher National Diploma in Mechanical Engineering. I actually went to a different college to start the course and, on the morning I arrived, I was told I would have to go elsewhere as the course was cancelled! I could either go to Glasgow or Napier. I got on a train to Glasgow and, before we knew it, we were in class at GCT. I call it my wonderful accident. It was a really

enjoyable, vibrant time and my links to GCU and this institution's people have been like Velcro ever since. That's why I am delighted and feel privileged to have been awarded an honorary degree by GCU. Considering my background started in a tenement, the son of a waitress and a foundryman it is an honour to be recognised by MY University. Famed for its social inclusion agenda, GCU is an institution with which I will always be both proud and privileged to be associated."

Another "wonderful accident" led Brian from a career as an employee to "the rollercoaster" life of an entrepreneur.

"After college, I joined WPL's graduate programme and became its youngest ever manager. That set my career on a fast upward curve. I saw it as a door opener and secured my first MD job at 26. I wanted to be the best employee I could, but I was caught by an opportunity to become an entrepreneur when a factory I worked for was consolidating with another. I couldn't leave the workforce so, at 38, I became an entrepreneur. It started almost by chance. Every business I've been involved with has been a wonderful accident. I've never looked back."

Now Brian is looking forward to supporting GCU's entrepreneurial students, as well as nurturing young businesses. "Although eternal life is not possible, there is a chance, in some

small way, I can live in eternity through the knowledge and wisdom that I pass on to the generations behind me. I hope to build their enthusiasm and belief system, but I want to learn from a new generation, too. I have worked with businesses that are like being handcuffed to a rocket. You get sucked in, it's like a drug and a large part of your life. Now, I don't need to be hands on, it's like a relay race. I'm passing the baton to someone with more energy."

And Brian has unexpected advice for students who fancy taking up that baton.

"You need to be able to juggle, multi-task like there's no tomorrow, but the most important things are building relationships and trust – and dreaming. Dreaming is fundamental. There's not so much space for dreaming today. Years ago I could sit and wonder how I would change how a factory ran, but now we have so many

devices, TV channels, outside activities that the choice to sit and do nothing doesn't hit your agenda. To me, creativity is about space and time. That's a challenge for younger businesses. We had space and time to be creative, they have to make time to continue Scotland's legacy of creativity and innovation.

"The entrepreneurial world offers amazing opportunities. You just have to know if it's right for you."

Honoured by GCU

Leading figures from the worlds of health, philanthropy and engineering joined more than 2,900 students at GCU's summer graduation ceremonies this year.

Award-winning Scottish photographer Harry Benson CBE was one of the special guests honoured by GCU during the University's summer graduations in July.

Ahead of receiving an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters from the University, Benson visited the campus for a digital screening of his early photographic works.

Benson, originally from Glasgow, began his career at the Hamilton Advertiser before moving to the Daily Sketch. He scooped what he describes as the 'story of his life' with his exclusive interview with mass murderer Peter Manuel. He then moved to join London's Fleet Street. In 1964, he photographed a young breakthrough band called The Beatles and captured the band having a pillow-fight, which became an iconic image of their early years.

"I have been following my camera. I learned very quickly that the camera will do what you tell it," said Benson.

Benson has photographed key moments of the 20th and 21st centuries, including marching with Dr Martin Luther King Jr during the Civil Rights Movement and Robert Kennedy's assassination. He is the only photographer who has pictured the last 12 US Presidents from President Dwight D. Eisenhower to President Donald J. Trump.

On returning to his hometown to pick up his most recent accolade, Benson admits that he had to leave Glasgow in order to succeed in his career.

"Glasgow wasn't the place I wanted to get out of. I wanted to stay and make my living here. I'm not talking about making a name. I just wanted to have a good living in Glasgow but I couldn't do it."

Having left school at just 13 years old, Benson was delighted to be receiving an Honorary Doctorate as his headmaster's



words still ring in his ears, 'there's nothing we can do with him!'

Harry was introduced by University Secretary and Vice-Principal Governance, Jan Hulme, who called him an artist of integrity.

He said: "I want to thank those that helped me and those that didn't. I've had a wonderful life chasing a camera, following it, and trying to put it in interesting places."



Doug and Dame Mary Perkins DBE are the founders of Specsavers, the world's largest private optician chain, selling more than 19 million pairs of glasses and 400 million contact lenses each year from nearly 2,000 stores in 10 countries. Specsavers has raised more than £5 million across the world for charities and good causes. The couple received an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science.



Boyd Multerer is a software developer who played a key role in the foundation of Xbox Live and the development of the operating systems for Microsoft's globally successful home-gaming consoles, Xbox One and Xbox 360. He has been hailed by Microsoft as Xbox's 'father of invention'. He received an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Engineering.

Boyd told students that "the future belongs to those who see it coming", before recounting his own experiences upon graduation. He said: "There are two things you should all now do. Make sure you do something you're passionate about, but make sure that you also solve the problems people care about."



Jerry White, who received an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws, launched the Landmine Survivors Network

– later Survivor Corps – with co-founder Ken Rutherford. Working closely with the late Princess Diana, and then King Hussein and Queen Noor of Jordan to address the humanitarian crisis caused by tens of millions of mines buried in more than 80 countries, he shared in the 1997 Nobel Prize for Peace awarded to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. He told students that "life is a minefield" before sharing his five-step recipe for survival, advising students to face facts, choose life, reach out, get moving, and give back.



Steve Begg, who received an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Engineering, has been in the film industry for nearly 30 years, working on visual effects for television shows, commercials and major feature films, amassing a list of credits including Aliens, Tomb Raider, Batman, Kingsman and Casino Royale, Skyfall and Spectre. Steve revealed how he grew up in an Edinburgh council house "a million miles away from Hollywood". However, he wasn't deterred from his ambition and taught himself the basics of animation and visual effects which laid the foundations of his career. He said: "Never give up on your end goal. I didn't, and now I'm doing what I always dreamed of."

Georg Kell, recipient of an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws, is the founder and former Executive Director of the United Nations Global Compact, the world's largest voluntary corporate sustainability initiative with over 12,000 corporate signatories in more than 170 countries. Georg said: "One of the beauties of life is that you don't know what's around the corner – you may hit a wall but you may find sunshine, even on a rainy day. Never forget that what connects us as human beings is stronger than what divides us. The enemy is us, but it is more rewarding to build something than destroy it. Also remember that ideas are the most powerful gift we have. Follow yours."



Honoured by GCU

GCU celebrated the achievements of two leading STEM ambassadors, a foremost economist, a climate-justice campaigner, a successful entrepreneur and public health professor at our winter graduation ceremonies this year.



Anne-Marie Imafidon MBE
Women-in-STEM Ambassador
Doctor of Science

In recognition of her outstanding and inspiring contribution to social enterprise in the form of the 'Stemettes' initiative, an award-winning social enterprise inspiring the next generation of females into Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics roles.



Brian Williamson
Chairman, Miigen
Doctor of Business Administration

In recognition of his outstanding support to start-up ventures and entrepreneurship together with his generous support for GCU's Caledonian Club and student-mentoring programmes.

Dr Susan Scurlock
CEO Primary Engineering
Doctor of Engineering

In recognition of her outstanding contribution as a STEM ambassador for future generations of young engineers, together with her work in establishing Primary Engineer and significant contribution to the university community of GCU.



Professor Sir David Greenaway
Economist and retired Vice
Chancellor Nottingham University
Doctor of Science

In recognition of his outstanding contribution and leadership of the academy, and his fundraising for the common good.

Lady Susan Rice
Chair, Scotland 2020 Climate Group
Doctor of Laws

In recognition of her outstanding contribution to Scotland's economic development, including her commitment to climate justice.



Professor Mike Kelly
Senior Visiting Fellow, Institute of Public
Health, University of Cambridge
Honorary Professorship and Lifetime
Achievement Award, GCU London

In recognition of his outstanding achievements in public health both in the UK and internationally.



Making their mark

We meet the recipients of GCU's Alumni Lifetime Achievement and Alumnus of the Year awards, an annual honour that celebrates the successes and contributions of graduates.



Marie Macklin CBE

2017 Alumni Lifetime Achievement Award Winner
In recognition of her Outstanding Contribution to Business and Entrepreneurship
BA Business Studies 1990

Marie Macklin CBE is Executive Chair of Macklin Enterprise Partnerships, a holding company that is building a diverse portfolio of entrepreneurial business and investment funds.

Elaine Acaster OBE

2017 Alumni Lifetime Achievement Award
In recognition of her Outstanding Contribution to Higher Education
Diploma in Dietetics 1967

Elaine, who is now retired, reached a significant milestone in her career when she took up the role of Vice-Principal of Strategy and Governance at the Royal Veterinary College, making her the first woman in the University's history to secure the post.



Margaret Gibson OBE

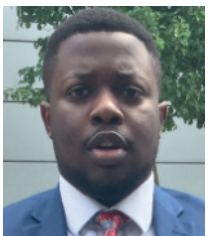
2017 Alumni Lifetime Achievement Award
In recognition of her Outstanding Contribution to Business and Entrepreneurship
Diploma in Communications Studies 1992

Margaret Gibson OBE is the Scotland Hub Leader for the EY Foundation, she mentors people from disadvantaged circumstances to support them in setting up a business or finding employment and a route to education.

Dika Odum

2017 GCU Alumnus of the Year
In recognition of his significant early career achievements
MSc Energy and Environmental Management 2015

Since his career began, Dika has been caring for the environment. He is the Managing Director of Nigeria's Kherithdum Ltd, which supports corporate training in environmental management and energy efficiency.



Josh Cottrell

2017 GCU London Alumnus of the Year
In recognition of his significant early career achievements
MSc International Fashion Marketing 2012

Just four years after graduating from GCUL, Josh co-founded successful clothing brand FAM Clothing. The snowsports line aims to bridge the gap between urban street fashion and the mountain.



Nominations are open now for our alumni awards. If you would like to nominate, visit www.gcu.ac.uk/alumni/awards

Impact in the field

As the top modern University in Scotland for research power, GCU is seeking to address the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals via three major societal challenges of Inclusive Societies, Living Healthy Lives and Sustainable Environments.



GCU's new Vice Principal and Pro-Vice Chancellor Research, Professor Cam Donaldson is leading on the development and implementation of GCU's Research Strategy 2020. Professor Donaldson, who also remains as the Yunus Chair in Social Business and Health, has overseen a number of exciting research initiatives at the University. Here are just a few examples of how GCU is delivering research with real impact.

Shaping the future of detection and diagnosis of glaucoma

Researchers are developing an eye test they hope can be used to diagnose glaucoma at an early stage.

Existing optometry tests often fail to pick up the eye condition until it reaches a relatively advanced stage, by which time it has already caused significant nerve damage.

Glaucoma covers a group of eye conditions that mainly affect the elderly and can, if untreated, cause permanent sight loss. Worldwide, it is the leading cause of irreversible blindness.

As it is associated with advancing age, increasing life expectancy means the number of patients requiring management of the condition is rising - unsurprisingly, that's putting a substantial burden on the health service.

With funding from the College of Optometrists, GCU PhD researcher Michelle Snowball, is trialling a computer-based test that measures if people can spot subtle differences between circles. The test has been developed by GCU Professor of Visual Neuroscience Gunter Löffler and his colleagues Drs Graeme Kennedy and Gael Gordon. The research team is planning to test a range of patients - both those with glaucoma and without - to determine if shape perception is adversely affected by glaucoma.

The test analyses the ability to spot differences between circles, some of which have a 'deformed' area, on a computer screen. Early lab trials have proved promising, with the shape test detecting glaucoma in both eyes of a patient who believed it had only affected one of his eyes.



Tackling Mediterranean landslides, erosion and floods

A research team is establishing new ways to use vegetation to help prevent landslides, erosion and floods in Mediterranean countries.

An emerging research field, ecological engineering, takes a holistic approach to incorporating soils, plants and water bodies into engineering design, to prevent and mitigate against natural disasters. It is viewed as more sustainable than the "hard" engineered solutions that currently dominate the industry.

This project, funded by the European Commission's Erasmus + research programme, aims to explore the skills gap in the industry for the first time in the history of the discipline, and will develop solutions, training and educational programmes aimed at academia and professionals.

The GCU team of researchers (Dr Slobodan Mickovski, Reader in Civil and Geotechnical Engineering; Dr Craig Thomson, Senior Lecturer in Sustainability Management and Dr Caroline Gallagher, Senior Lecturer in Geographical Information Systems) are working with researchers in Spain, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, France, Italy, and Macedonia to integrate ecology and engineering practices in a novel way to combat the effects of climate change in various Mediterranean regions.

Just walking the dog helps older adults stay active

Owning a dog may help older adults to meet physical activity levels recommended by the World Health Organization, according to a study by GCU, the University of Lincoln and WALTHAM Centre for Pet Nutrition.

The research, published in the open-access journal BMC Public Health, suggests that health professionals could encourage dog ownership or shared care of a dog to motivate older adults to be more physically active. The researchers concluded that owning a dog indicated a large, potential health improvement - with dog owners walking 22 more minutes a day at a moderate pace.

GCU's Dr Philippa Dall, Senior Research Fellow and lead researcher, said: "Dog owners were found to walk over 20 minutes more a day and this additional walking was at a moderate pace. For good health, WHO recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity a week. Over the course of a week, this additional 20 minutes walking each day may in itself be sufficient to meet these guidelines. Our findings represent a meaningful improvement in physical activity achieved through dog walking."

GCU is the top modern university in Scotland for research power. To find out more about research at GCU and how you can get involved, contact alumni@gcu.ac.uk

Beyond the joke: how comedy set me free

Earning an unexpected place on a communications course and learning to write jokes offered alumnus Phil Differ an escape route from the conventional career path at the Post Office. Sophie Thirkell finds out more.

The TV sketch show *Only an Excuse?* has had Scottish audiences in stitches for more than three decades. Traditionally aired every Hogmanay, the football-focused show began life on the radio before finding its way onto TV and the stage.

Phil Differ, the show's creator, is an alumnus of one of Glasgow Caledonian University's founding institutions. He graduated in 1982 from Glasgow College of Technology (GCT) with an HND in Communications Studies.

Since then he has been to the forefront of writing and producing tongue in cheek comedy such as *A Kick Up the Eighties*, *Spitting Image*, *Not the Nine O'Clock News*, *Naked Radio* and *Scotch & Wry*. Unlike his work, however,

Phil's background is rather conventional.



Phil on set during the filming of *Only an Excuse* in 2016.

He went to school in his hometown of Kilsyth, where there were not only rigid rules but also teachers who looked at life with tunnel vision. Writing jokes provided an unlimited escape to explore his creativity. Phil recalls a comedic awakening at the age of 10 while at the butcher's to pick up mince on a Saturday morning. He ran into a school friend holding a copy of *Valiant* comic. "Look!" his friend boasted, "I've won a pound." He then turned the pages and pointed to a joke with his name credited underneath. Something resonated in Phil right away: you can write jokes and get paid for it!

Fast forward to his early twenties, and Phil was beginning to rebel against his upbringing, to the horror of his parents.

He knew he did not want to pursue his tedious job with the Post Office, so wrote to the GCT to express an interest in the Communications Studies course, which encompassed TV, radio and media.

Luckily there was a last-minute dropout and Phil was invited to an interview, before being offered a place shortly after.

"The entire first year I absolutely loved because I was coming from an environment where you just filled out forms, took calls and dealt with people's complaints, to suddenly analysing film and television and writing sample scripts. Ideas were flying out all over the place," Phil says.

"It was the right decision for me, and I can honestly say that coming here when I did, changed my life completely."

It was also a time for Phil to hone his voice. He had already begun offering freelance written work to shows such as *Naked Radio*, and his pitching style was nothing less than persistent.

"Just get in there and do whatever they're looking for – just do it. If they say, 'I don't like that kind' then say 'well, what kind do you like?' You just keep going back and build from there.

"You learn how to adapt, and then, gradually, your confidence grows and your reputation grows. Also, the way

GCU changed my life completely

you look at things, the sharpness with which you look at situations, you start to see the comedy in it more. You get better and you find your own voice."

After graduating, Phil joined the BBC as an assistant producer working on shows such as *Naked Video*, *City Lights*, *Rab C Nesbitt* and *Laugh??? I Nearly Paid My Licence Fee*, he gradually earned his writing chops and more of his ideas made it onto the box. One of his star creations is *Baldy Man*, Gregor Fisher's bumbling character who charmed his way onto *Hamlet* cigar adverts.

Phil says that writing skits, such as those featuring the controversial *Mason Boyne*, became easier once he was allowed to mingle with the actors during filming. "Robbie Coltrane was always on, always funny. Everything he did, there was a kind of twinkle in his eye.

He was like a kid who never really grew up."

Another big break came in 1983 when Phil was promoted to the position of script editor. A few years later he pondered an initial idea that led to *Only an Excuse?*, the show he would go on to call his proudest professional achievement.

"We'd done a couple of football jokes on *Naked Radio* and it had gone down well," Phil says. "People didn't expect to hear jokes about Celtic and Rangers. I had no idea what I was doing but I had a script so thick for just a half-hour radio show.

"It spawned cassettes, stage shows, a television show and newspaper columns. Since it came from nothing, that's the thing I'm probably most proud of."

After 14 years as a senior producer at the BBC and subsequently the Comedy Unit, Scotland's top independent production company responsible for shows such as *Still Game* and *The Karen Dunbar Show*, a new love has entered his life in which he writes jokes for himself. For more than a decade Phil has been performing his own brand of observational humour, packed with classic references and hilarious stories.

Donning a playwright's hat is also a relatively new experience for Phil and his play *Double Feature* has premiered at the latest Edinburgh Fringe. And, he says, the ability to absorb inspiration and direction required for the job comes back to the skills he picked up in his studies. "I have no regrets, it was great," he says. "I'd go back in a minute."

Should have gone to Glasgow Caledonian

Roisin-Alana Di Giacomo talks to honorary graduates Doug and Dame Mary Perkins, founders of Specsavers, about the opportunities awaiting students.



Specsavers founders, Doug and Dame Mary Perkins DBE, met while studying optometry at Cardiff University in the 1960s.

Together they have built the world's largest private optical chain, Specsavers, selling more than 19 million pairs of glasses, 400 million contact lenses, and operating in ten countries with nearly 2,000 stores.

Described as a power couple and listed on Britain's rich list, which estimates their company's worth at £1.6 billion, the undoubtedly modest couple revolutionised eyecare with their joint-venture philosophy to deliver affordable choice and value for money, and demystify eyecare services for the public.

It was an idea that emerged from plans drawn up on a makeshift ping-pong table in their spare room and the company has grown into one of Britain's most successful brands, with one-in-three people in Britain donning their spectacles. Its much-loved tagline, Should've gone to Specsavers, is now a registered trademark and its adverts are legendary.

In recognition of their pioneering and innovative contributions to the development of healthcare worldwide, particularly in optometry, and to the educational support which they have provided to the University, Doug and Mary joined students to receive an Honorary Doctorate of Science for their outstanding contribution in the field of science at this year's summer graduations.

"I met my husband at university and we're still together. We've known each other 55 years and worked together for over 50 years, that's some

achievement," Dame Mary proudly tells a packed auditorium filled with graduands, their families and friends at

Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall. It is a partnership that started at university and she quips to the audience that

perhaps unions like theirs have been forged.

It is clear, in her eyes, that their greatest achievement is her long-standing partnership with her husband Doug, in life and in business. "Always remember it is important to have the support of families," she advises her on-looking audience.

Following their own graduation from Cardiff, the entrepreneurial pair took over Mary's father's practice and launched their first business, Bebbington and Perkins. By 1980, while juggling the demands of family life and three children, they sold the practice for £2 million to the company firm bought by Dolland & Aitchison, which was enough to set them up for life.

But instead of retiring on their fortune, they spotted a niche in the market when regulations to advertise

There is a great shortage of optics students

optical services were lifted by the Government of the day, and set about bringing affordable glasses and contact lenses to the masses with the first Specsavers branch opening in Guernsey in 1984. They now have 17.3 million customers in the UK, 60% of which are from the NHS, and the company is the largest provider of free NHS digital hearing aids. It's been a success story for the couple of relatively humble beginnings, Mary, from a council estate in Bristol, and Doug, the son of a policeman.

Mary admits that they could never have envisioned their future when they were starting out. The secret to success she believes is getting the first step. She said: "The days are gone when you have one job for life. I think when you have a passion for something, try to get the first step, even if it is not your ultimate dream job – it is a step.

"We started our own business straight out of university, as soon as we were registered, and we had people working for us – but it was impossible to

say then we could have imagined how far the business would develop."

The self-made entrepreneurs have never strayed far from their roots, choosing to remain in the four-bedroom house they bought more than 30 years ago. It's a family business too, with their three children John, Julie and Cathy choosing to work in the business side rather than following in their parents' footsteps as optometrists.

As the only University in Scotland to offer optometry and ranked second in the UK by the most recent Complete University Guide, GCU's School of Health and Life Sciences has enjoyed a strong partnership with the leading retailer.

"If you're an optics student, you are walking straight into a really good job. There is a great shortage of optics students. We employ a lot of GCU students and we are always looking for more," said Mary.

Her revelation that companies such as Specsavers need more opticians to cope with demand is good news for graduate optometrists and the newspapers are quick to print that the founders are warning of a shortage in the marketplace. She acknowledges too, that the success of Specsavers relies upon graduates from beyond optometry where business, marketing and retail students play a pivotal role in the global success of Specsavers.

"It is a great honour to receive a Doctor of Science from GCU; it's truly a two-for-one! As an employer of more than 30,000 staff in the UK, education heads up our requirements. From apprentices to school students, college students to graduates from top universities like GCU – you should feel very proud too of your University.

"The University for the Common Good hits home with me. It's about helping others to be the best they can be. That's part of the Specsavers values where we take learning and development seriously for everyone to help them be at their best."

From underneath her spectacles, and with Doug by her side, she jests to the audience that "it could be said, you Should've gone to GCU!"

Celebrating success

Our students continue to be our finest ambassadors, achieving success and industry recognition at national and international level. Here are just some examples from this year.

David Clarke, BA Social Work

I was delighted to win the Bright Spark category at the Scottish Social Services Awards, which celebrate people who work in social services in this country, and the UNISON Branch Top Male Social Worker Award.

It's amazing to be recognised, especially as I never intended to become a social worker – it was actually my passion for supporting young people in care that motivated me to study a BA Social Work.

I ran a business but never enjoyed it. When I sold it, I thought I'd retire and, with my wife, foster young people full-time as we wanted to commit to helping people. It was challenging to switch off though, so to inform my fostering practice, I looked into studying.

The programme attracts very different people but we are all

motivated by wanting to help the most vulnerable in society. So, despite my initial plans, I'm delighted to now be working with the council in such a worthwhile role that has an impact on people's lives. My goal is to do a PhD but the draw of social work is just too great for the moment.

My wife and I now have two children of our own, aged three and two, and have fostered a number of children while I have been studying. We are currently fostering a teenager, so it's a busy home life. It's mega challenging but the rewards of fostering are so great.

I couldn't have done it without my wife's support, but family or other caring commitments shouldn't be a barrier to studying. Yes it will be hard, but if you have a burning desire, then you will be supported at GCU. Support is always there – from lecturers to the

first-class Learning Development Centre. GCU genuinely wants you to succeed.



Damien Mullen, MA TV Fiction Writing

I was writing my dissertation for an MA in TV Fiction Writing at GCU when I was approached to write a script for the prestigious A Play, a Pie and a Pint series at Glasgow's Oran Mor. I was overwhelmed, but it is the biggest opportunity for new writing talent in Scotland, so I just had to go for it. It was my ambition to write for the series by the time I was 30 or 40, so to have my play Hameldaeme performed at the age of 26 – I just can't believe it.

I have always been interested in writing comedy and I had done stand up, so I looked at this programme and the people who had completed it, but I thought, I just don't have the experience

even to apply. I was dumbfounded to get onto the MA TV Fiction Writing programme and be awarded a Warner Bros. scholarship – it was incredible not just to have that funding, but to have the support of the world's finest entertainment company.

Seeing my work staged for A Play, a Pie and a Pint feels magical, though it is exhausting and a whirlwind.

If you're sitting in a job that's not for you wishing you could be writing, this is the programme that makes you see there is a reason you're here and that you will be shown how to achieve your dream. You won't get a better opportunity anywhere.



Laura-Jane Howard, BA International Business and Human Resources Management

I was thrilled to win a Best Team Leader Award at Enactus UK's National Competition and incredibly proud of our team, which won an amazing five awards.

Enactus is a global organisation which inspires students to improve the world through entrepreneurialism and its competitions showcase how students are transforming lives. Preparing for the contest and juggling course work was extremely stressful, but I love working with Enactus, it's so rewarding.

We have launched three projects – the Work Ready Action Programme (WRAP), where students mentor school pupils

from Castlemilk, a partnership with Glasgow City Mission, where we are working with staff and homeless people to develop a jam-making social enterprise, and Bling a Ling, where we work with people with learning disabilities to make jewellery.

One of the people we worked with on the jam-making project has already got a job in hospitality, directly because of what he learned while making the jam – it built his confidence and his career path. We make innovative flavours such as strawberry and black pepper and are already stocked in a city café. We hope to expand into making pasta sauces and run pop-up restaurants.

It's so worthwhile.

Enactus has grown massively at GCU – this year we have impacted on at least 150 people's lives, last year it was 20. It was inspiring to attend the competition and see the impact all the groups are having on people's lives.

Lyall Campbell, BSc Computer Games (Design)

I entered the #MAKEITSUPERHOT global games design competition, which tasked game designers to create a modification, add-on or standalone game based on last year's hit game, Superhot.

I created a pizza-delivery game, entitled Peer-2-Pizza.

The competition was organised by website Mod DB and the developers of the Superhot game, a unique first-person shooter. Entries were judged on playability, fun factor, creativity and how much inspiration had been drawn from the Superhot game itself.

As well as landing a \$5,000 prize, I received other goodies too, including PC parts. Judges branded the game "unique".

Superhot sells itself strongly on its brilliant 'time-moves-when-you-

move' mechanic, which was definitely going to be the main characteristic of my game. I wanted to avoid the shooting element from the start though, or something that might become too similar to the original game.

Throwing and catching became the base for my game, with the main goal of getting an object to a certain place. As for the pizza idea, I was using pizza as a silly placeholder object, which naturally got way out of hand, leading to a silly game about delivering pizza via computers and technology.

My programme and its various modules at GCU, has been great for building up a broad knowledge of game development, allowing me to build a practical set of skills. This competition was a great way of

directly applying the knowledge and skills gained throughout the course. Without it, the game would be far from what it is today.



Sir Alex Ferguson event changes the lives of students

Celebrity golf day at The Carrick and a fundraising live auction will ensure more GCU students can benefit from life-changing experiences.

Sir Alex Ferguson CBE, assembled a team of sporting legends and celebrities for a round of golf that raised £78,000 to offer talented students life-changing experiences.

Old Firm legends John Hartson and Walter Smith were among a host of celebrities to join Sir Alex at The Carrick golf course, located at Cameron House, to raise money for scholarships, awards and opportunities to make a significant difference to the lives of talented GCU students.

The day also included a gala dinner and live auction, hosted by broadcaster Dougie Donnelly.

Money raised will add to Sir Alex's own commitment of £500,000 over the next 10 years to help more than 200 GCU students access higher education, or to take up life-changing opportunities during their time of study.

Sir Alex said: "I was delighted to help Glasgow Caledonian University launch its Foundation in 2015, to help students from all backgrounds

and across all disciplines. Since then, I have been on the Glasgow campus several times meeting staff and students and have been impressed by the University's work, particularly in helping people, irrespective of their background, progress in life. Today we have the opportunity to raise further funds for students and awareness of the great work of the Foundation. I hope that new donors will also support its work, and together we can make a difference."



Pictured: John Hartson, Eilidh Barbour, Walter Smith and Pat Nevin
Sir Alex Ferguson and Dougie Donnelly

Student beneficiaries were able to share their stories with Sir Alex personally as they accompanied him around the course.

One of those is 22-year-old GCU Social Sciences student Jayde, who admits she could barely read or write until she was 14 due to being a carer for her mother. Thanks to Sir Alex's generosity she recently travelled to the African Leadership College in Mauritius, a GCU partnership institution, to gain an understanding of life and study in other countries.

And she was able to thank the former Manchester United boss as he hosted the inaugural Sir Alex Ferguson Golf Classic event on Friday, August 25th, in partnership with GCU.

Jayde said: "This past year at GCU has been the most memorable and enjoyable of my life. Receiving a Sir Alex scholarship to study at the African Leadership College in Mauritius earlier this year totally pushed me out of my comfort zone. It was a very rewarding experience."

Environmental Civil Engineering student James, 30, travelled to Malawi, where he helped build a climate-resistant classroom block to combat floods in the country.

James said: "Going to Malawi, I had to engage with people who

don't speak the same language and build a rapport with them. Seeing how humble and happy the people are, given they don't have access to as many opportunities as we do, really brings it home how lucky we are."



Save the date: Friday 20th July 2018

We are delighted to announce that our 2018 Golf Day and Gala Dinner will take place on 20th July 2018. Sir Alex Ferguson CBE and celebrity friends will be joining us again at The Carrick and Cameron House on the stunning shores of Loch Lomond.

To register your interest or to find out more information then please contact a member of the Foundation Team at foundation@gcu.ac.uk or call 0141 273 1014.



John really cuts the Mustard

As the Magnusson Awards reach a tenth anniversary, we catch up with a notable recipient to find out about his career in psychiatric nursing and his colourful band.

The Magnus Magnusson Awards were created in the name of the University's late Chancellor, journalist and broadcaster Magnus Magnusson KBE, to cultivate the ambitions and dreams of students who wish to share their talents in some way with others.

Over the past ten years, the awards have already supported more than 80 students to undertake their own dream projects worldwide.

At a glittering ceremony held in the University's Saltire Centre, Principal and Vice-Chancellor Professor Pamela Gillies CBE FRSE and Dr Sally Magnusson, Magnus' daughter and a broadcaster in her own right, discussed their favourite memories of the awards and the story of how it all began.

Sally also interviewed former student winners, sharing the remarkable impact their award has had on their life and the lives of others several years on.

John McAlinden was one of those former winners. Using his Magnusson Award, he recorded his first album, which led to his band, Colonel Mustard and the Dijon 5, touring the world.

"Winning a Magnusson Award was great," says John. "On the day I received it, I was bursting with excitement. I used it to support my work playing in and managing bands and it has had an amazing, priceless effect on what I've achieved – travelling around the world and shaping my philosophy of life.

"I wanted to have an even greater connection with audiences, and with friends I formed Colonel Mustard and the Dijon 5. We play all sorts of genres and it has developed into something unique with a message of peace and

love that people of all ages and demographics can get involved in. It's spawned the Yellow Movement with its manifesto to make life more interesting and fun through music and laughter and a desire to connect.

"Just knowing there are good people out there who are prepared to give you a chance was amazing and returning to the tenth anniversary event, and seeing some of the other recipients' world-changing work, was fantastic."

John said he didn't consider university when he left school, simply choosing to undertake odd jobs and travel.

"When I got back from travelling, I knew I wanted to do something more meaningful with my life," he says. "I had watched my dad pass away and witnessed really good and not so good care. I realised nursing was a great career."

John enrolled at GCU where he "loved" gaining new experiences on placements and on campus.

"Just being in the buzz of an environment of learning was a great experience," he says. "However, I never found a placement that really excited me in adult nursing."

John had begun working part-time with the Mungo Foundation and enjoyed looking after people with mental health problems so, in the longer term, after gaining experience in adult nursing, he returned to GCU in 2007 to further his studies with a conversion programme focusing on psychiatric nursing.

"I loved being back at uni," he says. "I've met so many friends for life and, as

I was more mature, I could really enjoy learning."

John is now a charge nurse working in an intensive psychiatric care unit. "It can be busy and challenging but it's very rewarding and enjoyable and I am part of a fantastic, supportive team.

"It's a tough career, but the great thing is no day is the same and it's wonderful to help people.

"It can be difficult at times but music and my family – my wonderful partner Donna and three of the best kids in the world – help me de-stress. I spend a lot of weekends gigging and most of the summer performing at festivals. We played South Korea last year – how the audience understood my accent I'll never know – and we have amazing gigs coming up and are writing and recording our second album. We might enter the Eurovision Song Contest and keep things as weird and interesting as we possibly can in the 'Dijonverse'.

You need a lot of energy to do it all, but I'm lucky enough to have such a varied and interesting life and to have had such amazing support along the way."



Dr Sally Magnusson interviews previous Magnusson Award Winners, Joel, John and Gillian at the 10th Anniversary celebration event.

Celebrating a decade

Seven awards were presented to inspirational GCU students during a special event marking the tenth year of the Magnus Magnusson Awards.

One of this year's inspirational winners, MSc Climate Justice student Fiona Jarvis, is in Nepal to explore the country's fragile ecosystem and raise awareness of climate change within the local community.

Her award is funding her work with Volunteer Initiative Nepal, a not-for-profit organisation that focuses on sustainable, community-based development in the most disadvantaged regions of the country.

Fiona said: "Not only will being a part of this project support the practical application of my coursework, but it will give me hands-on learning opportunities and invaluable experience."

Thanks to their Magnus Magnusson Award, Irene Fosuhemaa Bossman and Dr Bright Anyimah Oduro, both from Ghana, are working together to set up a team that delivers health promotional activities and offers ongoing support to patients in two rural Ghanaian districts.

The funding will go towards organising screening campaigns, developing educational materials, acquiring medical supplies, and educating patients and health care professionals operating in Ghana

about diabetes and the management of the condition.

This year's awards were presented to:

Fiona Jarvis

Sir Alex Ferguson Award
MSc Climate Justice

Christine Hazleton

Merchants House Magnusson Award

Research Fellow in the Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions Research Unit

Jessica Hancock

Merchants House Magnusson Award
PGCert Higher Education, GCU London

Joanna McAleer

Sir Alex Ferguson Award
BA Hons International Business and Tourism Management

Aloys Muhashyi

Ede & Ravenscroft Magnusson Award
BSc (Hons) Computing

Noah Walakir

Santander Magnusson Award
BA (Hons) Social Sciences

Irene Fosuhemaa Bossman and Bright Anyimah Oduro

Bishops Conference Magnusson Award
MSc Diabetes Care and Management, and MSc Clinical Ophthalmology and Vision Research

Making a difference

New partnership gives talented pupils a powerful boost to study science and technology

GCU's award-winning widening-access initiative, the Advanced Higher Hub, has been helping talented school pupils achieve their dreams of attending university since its launch in 2013. Now, following a £50k donation from the ScottishPower Foundation, up to 40 more students will study science and technology subjects at the Hub this year.

The Advanced Higher Hub reaches out to 28 partner schools to deliver Advanced Highers at GCU's city-centre campus, bridging between school and university, giving pupils a unique insight into the many pathways open to them and access to University facilities.

Glasgow Caledonian University Foundation works with donors and friends, raising funds to help transform lives through education. In the past year, we have received support from generous donors including:

The Data Lab

Our innovative MSc Big Data Technologies programme attracted funding for 10 scholarships through a partnership with The Data Lab, The Scottish Funding Council and the European Social Fund.

Robert Barr's Charitable Trust

GCU's Vision Centre benefitted from a funding boost from Robert Barr's Charitable Trust to enhance its cutting-edge facilities.

retailRIGHT and Hammerson

The British School of Fashion joined forces with charity retailRIGHT and retail property specialist Hammerson, to help students on their way to becoming successful fashion entrepreneurs, through £30,000 of seed funding and access to prime retail space.

Hugh Fraser Foundation

The Hugh Fraser Foundation renewed its support for GCU students by awarding £25,000 to establish five new Common Good Scholarships for students from disadvantaged areas.



Banking on a brighter future with Santander

Glasgow Caledonian University has signed a new agreement with Santander Universities, signifying an incredible £1m of support for students and staff.

Since 2010, Santander Universities has supported more than 700 beneficiaries at GCU, providing life-changing opportunities to access education and travel, develop business ideas and enhance employability through matched funding internships.

Commenting at a special event to celebrate the new agreement, Principal and Vice Chancellor Professor Pamela Gillies, CBE FRSE said: "We are so delighted to work with a partner who has a shared passion for providing

educational opportunities for all and for working with our communities locally and internationally to deliver social benefit."

Jillian Watt, Director GCU Foundation said: "The event has been a wonderful opportunity for us to thank Santander Universities for their phenomenal generosity and support. Our Santander team here on campus have become an integral part of the GCU community and, through their philanthropic support, they really are helping to change lives."

Susan Allen, Head of Retail Distribution, Santander UK, said: "Santander is committed to supporting higher education as well as local communities across the UK. The partnership with Glasgow Caledonian University is a great example of how two very different institutions can work together effectively. It has been great to meet with both staff and students and hear about their experiences and the real impact made by our joint programmes."



Bringing our precious pictures back to life

Meet the Scottish tech firm taking old photographs from the attic to a digital time capsule.

Stirling entrepreneurs Craig Lemmon and Campbell Ferrier are on a mission to take generations of old photographs from old shoeboxes into the 21st century.

The Stirling-based tech experts, who recently supported GCU Foundation's Sir Alex Ferguson

Golf Classic (see pages 26-27), are founders of Miigen, which they created after both suffered the heartache of having to sort through possessions belonging to a parent who had recently died.

As they shared with each other stories about sifting through huge boxes

of old photographs they knew nothing about, they realised they had hit on something huge.

And in that moment, Miigen was born.

Craig explains: "It's not something that people want to think about, but actually it's incredibly important that

we, as a society, ensure that our social and community history is kept alive. We can do that by saving these old photographs – these precious memories – now. The problem is, we often wait until it's too late."

Miigen allows users to capture images of old photographs simply using a smartphone, tablet or even scanner and upload them to their Miigen profile.

Users can also create groups for their family, a shared resource to capture the images of the older adults in their family and allow them to access the image to leave a voice tag without the need to be a user.

Miigen's voice tag function even allows users to narrate the story of the events featured in the image, capturing the emotion of the moment and acting as a memory trigger in later life.

Although not specifically targeted at dementia sufferers, Miigen has attracted a great deal of interest from groups who recognise the benefits of helping sufferers keep their memories alive.

Craig said: "Miigen is all about saving memories and we are hopeful that it can also be a useful tool in the fight against degenerative memory diseases, such as dementia."

"We know that dementia is one of the biggest health issues facing us in the UK, with 850,000 suffering from the illness today, so we're keen to get

Being able to narrate memories is just wonderful

families together to help to save these precious memories."

As well as interest from Silicon Valley, Miigen attracted an impressive £250,000 investment in just seven days in September.

"I think we've quite quickly proved the concept and investors really grasped what it's all about

- crucially, they grasped the potential the business has," said co-founder Campbell.

As well as successfully securing funding, Miigen has caught the attention of a high-profile personality in BBC Scotland weather presenter Judith Ralston.

Judith discovered Miigen earlier this year and she loved the new technology so much that she signed up for her own account.

Judith said: "I discovered Miigen not long after I watched an old video of my mother – and I was really quite blown away by it. This simple idea, taking old photographs from our shoeboxes in the loft and being able to narrate and store them for our kids and grandkids is just wonderful."

As well as helping to ensure old memories are never lost, the team behind Miigen is committed to improving social and digital inclusion.

Craig explained: "We know that later-life adults are consistently left behind when it comes to social and digital inclusion, so it's one of the aims of Miigen to do our bit to help. We've created a Miigen Biographer facility which will essentially allow the biographer to work as the link between users and their Miigen profile."

"Typically, Miigen Biographers are community leaders who are running local events or meetings for older adults. They are web literate and have a real interest in capturing the story of their village or town."

Miigen's user base is expanding rapidly, with 7,500 new users added last month.

Craig and Campbell are committed to building the business in Stirling, but that doesn't mean they don't aspire to make Miigen a truly global business. The Miigen platform has already been extended into Orlando and is now hosted in Florida as well as in the company's Edinburgh datacentre.

"There has been some really incredible interest from America," said Craig. "So much so that we exhibited at the International Conference for Active Ageing exhibition in Orlando in October."



Thank you for taking the time to read about Miigen why not click on www.miigen.com/promotions/gcu and share a memory with us of the first band you saw when you attended Glasgow Caledonian as a student.

To learn more about Miigen, and to sign up, visit www.Miigen.com.

Opt in to stay connected with your University



"Opt In" is a phrase you'll hear a lot in 2018. Changes in data protection law are coming into effect in 2018, and the new legislation means that you need to opt in to the type of communication you want to receive from the University moving forward.

GCU will need your explicit permission to stay in touch. In the future, we will only be able to keep you updated on news and events, send you our annual alumni magazine and inform you of exclusive benefits and services if you have formally consented to being contacted.

We want to ensure that we keep the details we hold about you up-to-date and communicate with you fully in accordance with your wishes. Please complete this short online form to update your preferences. Failure to do this may result in you not receiving any further communications from us after the regulations are in force.

Find out more and complete your opt in at gcu.ac.uk/alumni/optin

**Opt in
to keep
in touch.**

Alumni words of wisdom

Don't be afraid of making mistakes or be disheartened if you have made any. Many of the most successful people in the world, in numerous fields, have made major errors along the way. However, it didn't halt their progress because having a strong mentality enabled them to deal with setbacks. In fact, they learned from their mistakes and this helped them achieve their ultimate goals. Errors can happen but the key to success is dealing with them in a positive way and pursuing your goals with an ongoing belief.



Gordon Smith
Business Studies, 1977
Former Professional Footballer, Coach and Executive now involved in Media.



Dika Odum
Energy and Environmental Management, 2015
MD/CEO Kherithdum Limited

Now is the best time to discover yourself, know your passion and set your goals. Learn as much as you can, both from theory and shared experiences. They might not make sense to you now, but keep equipping yourself. You'll never know the value of your arsenal till you face a battle. Life is not a bed of roses so like the Boy Scouts, Be Prepared!

Follow your passions, don't be afraid to think big and think differently. As a female entrepreneur I live by the motto to never stop learning, so be open-minded to opportunity, learn from failure and be resilient. Constantly seek feedback, identify mentors and surround yourself with the very best people. Believe in yourself and others will follow.

Being entrepreneurial, constant selling helps you stand out. Not just your product, but your ideas, your vision, your projects and your potential. Relationship building and influencing skills are invaluable. Achieving all of this can only come with experience so put yourself outside of your comfort zone, challenge yourself, invest in yourself and constantly learn from the support around you.



Isatou Njai
International Business, 2017
Co-Founder, Hippo & Hedgehog

University for the Common Good



Alumni Engagement Team, Glasgow Caledonian University

T: +44 (0) 141 331 8769 E: alumni@gcu.ac.uk

 www.facebook.com/GlasgowCaledonianUniversity  [Glasgow-Caledonian-University-Alumni-Official](#)  [@GCUToday](#)

Glasgow Caledonian University is a registered Scottish charity, number SCO21474. Glasgow Caledonian University Foundation is the operating name for the charitable fundraising activities of Glasgow Caledonian University. PDS_108817_12/17.