

Honorary doctorate from University of Edinburgh for Gordon Aikman



In a speech to medical graduates from Edinburgh University, MND patient and campaigner Gordon Aikman made a heartfelt call for them to be the generation to cure the disease.

Aikman, 30, made the speech as he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Edinburgh at the Usher Hall for his efforts to fund a cure for the disease and transform care for people with MND in Scotland.

Receiving a standing ovation from the audience he called on the assembled graduates to “be the generation that administers the world’s first ever cure for MND”.

Aikman said: “Firstly, a massive thank you to the University of Edinburgh for this great honour which I am truly humbled to accept. Thanks too for the kind words from Professor Iredale.

“Eight years ago I was sitting where you are today. Proud, excited, relieved, a whole world of opportunities ahead. Then, last year, things for me took an unexpected turn. I remember vividly sitting opposite my neurologist at the Western General here in Edinburgh. The pain in his eyes as he explained there was nothing he could do. No treatment. No cure. Nothing. I was dying – and fast. ===== When you’re 29 and feel healthy, that is hard to accept. You expect there to be a packet of pills for everything – not this time. And it was that sense of unfairness, frustration, helplessness that forced me to act.

“My campaign has been my way of turning a negative into a positive. Together we have transformed patient care and raised

hundreds of thousands of pounds. That is amazing – but it is not enough.

“What makes medicine so incredible is that it’s constantly evolving, ever advancing. Not by chance, but because great minds refuse to rest: ever striving for that next breakthrough, ever ambitious, ever hopeful. So as you go into the clinics, laboratories and hospitals of the world, I don’t want you to just be mopping up the mess this and too many other diseases leave behind. I want you to be the generation that administers the world’s first ever cure for MND.”