

An OBE for the 'father of optometry'

A leading proponent of Scotland's drive to achieve the highest standards of eyecare in the world has been awarded an OBE in the 2019 Queen's New Year's Honours.

Donald Cameron, 64, from Edinburgh was delighted to learn that he had been nominated by colleagues and shortlisted for the prestigious honour which is given in recognition of his services to Scottish eyecare.

Donald was one of three leading optometrists who formed Optometry Scotland, the profession's organisation which lobbied the Scottish Government and successfully negotiated the landmark Scottish General Ophthalmic Services Contract (GOS) 2006, resulting in higher service levels and free eye care for all in Scotland.

GOS introduced more comprehensive eye examinations and treatments resulting in fewer people having to use valuable hospital resources. The enhanced service has also resulted in many sight-threatening conditions being detected earlier.

Critically, and unlike other parts of the UK, patients are not charged for this NHS-funded service, which also means Scottish optometrists are given grants for cutting edge diagnostic equipment. This ground-breaking model remains at the forefront of eyecare in the world.

Retired Donald was Managing Director of Cameron Optometry in St Vincent Street, Edinburgh which was one of the first in the UK to invest in and develop this new imaging and interpretative technology.

This specialism was further developed as he was concurrently a practising hospital optometrist, working at eye clinics and

managing patients at the Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion in Edinburgh.

In 2002 Donald was elected to the General Optical Council in London and began discussions with the UK Government for safe optometry prescribing of therapeutic drugs. This resulted in optometrists having access to all drugs used in the treatment of eye disease and the ocular adnexa. This continues to be supported by the fully funded Independent Therapeutic Prescribing Course at Glasgow Caledonian University.

Father to Ian and Lorna and husband to Libby, Donald was one of the first to pass the exam in 2009 and prescribe eye medication – a significant step in the clinical practice and professional responsibilities of optometrists.

He was also a lecturer and Director of Optometry Educators Limited for over 10 years. It was one of the first companies in the UK to harness the benefits of IT technology to videolink lectures.

Donald was appointed Programme Director for Optometry within NHS Education for Scotland (NES) in 2009 and was able to found and consolidate substantial and unique educational opportunities for optometrists.

In 2010, he established the first UK Teach and Treat clinic in Edinburgh. Patients with acute eye disease were seen and treated by optometrists under the supervision of a consultant ophthalmologist. There are now three such clinics in Scotland.

He has actively supported and raised awareness of electronic connections between community optometrists and hospital eye services, through the Eyecare Integration Project. The new system won the Royal College of Ophthalmologists Innovation award in 2011.

His most significant educational achievement came in 2014 with his founding of a Masters online course in Primary Care

Ophthalmology for Optometrists through the University of Edinburgh Medical School. A second course was created in 2015 and the courses jointly have over 80 global students, winning the Queen's Award for Education the same year.



Donald Cameron

Donald has Honorary membership and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of Optometrists as well as an Honorary Life Fellowship of the Association of British Dispensing Opticians and Life Fellowship of the College of Optometrists, London.

He said: "Being named on the Queen's Honours List is a real privilege. I can't count the number of wonderful people who have helped me along the way and helped build what is now Optometry Scotland– the OBE is a testament to them as much as me.

"It's also a great honour for optometry in Scotland. It shows that we're making significant progress and our efforts are being recognised more widely."

Samantha Watson, Chair of Optometry Scotland, said: "Today, Scottish optometry is leading the world in the design and delivery of community eyecare, and Donald has been instrumental in that.

"He continues to be generous with both his time and resources, helping with charitable work and eyecare projects both in Scotland and overseas, and through his Optometry practice, and remains a constant advocate for the profession. His OBE is richly deserved."