

# Local hero celebrated in parliament

## Thompson celebrates achievements of local hero Professor Sir Geoff Palmer in UK Parliament

Owen Thompson MP celebrated Midlothian's Professor Sir Geoff Palmer on his Pride of Scotland Lifetime Achievement Award by tabling a parliamentary motion in his honour.

The Early Day motion notes the many achievements of Sir Geoff, currently the Chancellor of Heriot Watt University, both academically and through his powerful work as an educator on racial history and campaigner for human rights and racial justice.



Sir Geoff Palmer taken on Forth Street PHOTO ©2020 The Edinburgh Reporter

The Midlothian MP said: "I was thrilled to see Penicuik's own Professor Sir Geoff Palmer gain recognition at the Pride of Scotland Award.

"Sir Geoff was Scotland's first black Professor and has been a real trailblazer at whatever he puts his energy into, with groundbreaking contributions to Scottish society and to science.

"Most recently, it's largely through Professor Sir Geoff's relentless efforts that the plaque for the Melville Monument will now better reflect his actions and attitudes towards the slave trade.

"A more honest narrative is needed about Scotland's history, as a crucial step on our journey to becoming a more inclusive

and fair society. Professor Sir Geoff is helping make this happen.

“Profound congratulations again to Professor Sir Geoff for the lifetime achievement award. I was delighted to mark this at Westminster and I wish him well with his continued inspirational work.”



Professor Sir Geoff Palmer. Photo taken at BLM protest Holyrood Park 7 June 2020 Photo: Martin P. McAdam [www.martinmcadam.com](http://www.martinmcadam.com)

The text of the Early Day Motion reads: “That this House expresses its profound congratulations to Professor Sir Geoff Palmer on being awarded a Pride of Scotland Lifetime Achievement Award; notes that Professor Sir Geoff Palmer has made significant contributions to fields as diverse as brewing and human rights activism; recognises that he discovered the barley abrasion process, which was subsequently adopted by the UK’s biggest breweries; notes that in 1998, he became the fourth person to be honoured with the American Society of Brewing Chemists Award of Distinction; further notes that he became Scotland’s first black professor in 1988 and is now serving as emeritus professor in the School of Life Sciences at Heriot-Watt University as well as the University’s chancellor; understands that he lived in Jamaica until shortly before his fifteenth birthday before moving to England to join his mother, who had moved here as a member of the Windrush generation; commends his role over the past year as a powerful voice in the movement for change prompted by Black Lives Matter, including leading the successful campaign for a reinterpretation of the Melville Monument in Edinburgh honouring Henry Dundas.”