

Posthumous honorary degree awarded to Eric Liddell

The University of Edinburgh has awarded an honorary degree to athlete and missionary Eric Liddell who won a gold medal at the 1924 Olympics in Paris – in the same hall where he first graduated.

The university recognised his success with a posthumous degree of doctor honoris cause from the University's Moray House School of Education and Sport one hundred years after his sporting success and his graduation with a BSc in Pure Science. The university's Chair of Sport, Professor Grant Jarvie nominated Liddell for the honour which highlights his contribution to sport and to humanity even a century after his historic win.

Mr Liddell, called the 'Flying Scotsman', won the 400 metres at the 1924 summer games in a world record time of 47.6 seconds, and a bronze medal in the 200 metres.

Mr Liddell was represented at the ceremony in the University's McEwan Hall by his daughter, Patricia Liddell Russell, who accepted the award on his behalf. Mrs Russell, aged 88, travelled from her home in Ontario, Canada to attend the ceremony.



Professor Grant Jarvie, Chair of Sport, and Mrs Patricia Liddell Russell pose with her father Eric Liddell's Honorary Degree from the University of Edinburgh. Mr Liddell was awarded a posthumous degree of doctor honoris causa by the University's Moray House School of Education and Sport.

PHOTO Neil Hanna

Mr Liddell, dubbed the 'Flying Scotsman', won the 400 metres at the 1924 summer games in a world record time of 47.6 seconds, and a bronze medal in the 200 metres.

He refused to take part in the 100-metre heats, which were held on a Sunday, in line with his Christian beliefs. The life of the principled Liddell helped to inspire the 1981 Oscar-winning film *Chariots of Fire*, which told the story of his and others' Olympic triumphs.

Mr Liddell enrolled for a BSc degree in Pure Science at the University of Edinburgh in 1920 and graduated four years later on 17 July 1924, just six days after winning gold, in the same hall where his honorary degree was conferred a century later.

Following his athletic career, the father of three worked as a

science teacher, and later served as a missionary around the world, most notably in China. He was held in a Japanese internment camp in 1943, where he died on 21 February 1945, aged 43.

Addressing the graduation assembly, Professor Grant Jarvie said: "Eric Liddell is one of Scotland's most celebrated athletes of all time. When inducted into the Scottish Sports Hall of Fame he topped the public vote as Scotland's most popular sports person. A century after his Olympic success and graduating from University of Edinburgh what Eric Liddell represents is the best of all of us and the promise and invitation of what we could do to help others.

"As we look forward to another Olympic Games in Paris this summer, it is entirely deserved that we honour this remarkable person's contribution to sport and humanity with this honorary degree today."



Mrs Patricia Liddell Russell receives an Honorary Degree from the University of Edinburgh on behalf of her father, Scottish

athlete and humanitarian Eric Liddell.
PHOTO Neil Hanna



Mrs Patricia Liddell Russell poses with her father Eric Liddell's Honorary Degree from the University of Edinburgh, and his Olympic Gold medal from the 1924 Paris games. Mr Liddell was awarded a posthumous degree of doctor honoris causa by the University's Moray House School of Education and Sport.

PHOTO Neil Hanna