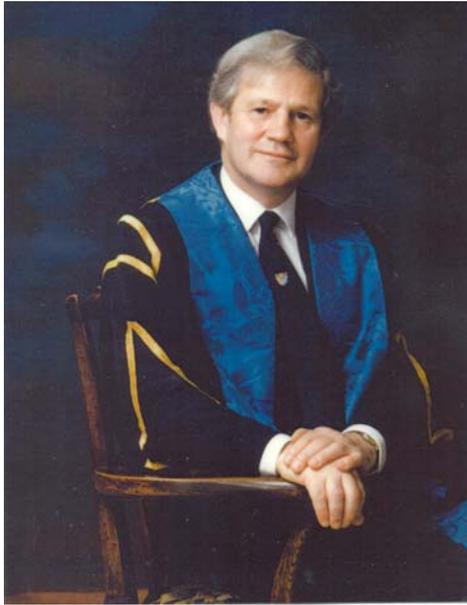


Professor David J Tedford



David Tedford will be best remembered for his many contributions to Scotland and the University of Strathclyde. However, two things stand out most vividly. Firstly, he was a very good natured and genuine person who was generous, some would say over-generous, with his time to others. Secondly, he was a distinguished visionary academic who recognised at a very early stage that for a university to be truly successful it had to have strong collaborative relationships nationally and internationally. These features in turn guided his actions throughout his life.

David was born in 1931 in Coatbridge and lived most of his life there. He went to Coatbridge High School and showed his gifts in numerous ways. Excelling in his academic studies, he was dux of the school, with a special aptitude for mathematics and was advised that he should study engineering. David was also a talented athlete in several sports reaching high standards in football and tennis. He inherited a love of music from his parents and learned to play piano at a young age. Playing classical pieces was one of his methods of relaxation.

In 1948, David went to the Royal College of Science and Technology, now the University of Strathclyde, to study for a BSc in electrical engineering and gained a first class honours degree in 1952 together with various prizes. In the non-teaching periods, David completed an 18 months practical training with the General Electric Company in Birmingham. He then went on to do a PhD and his thesis was concerned with time lag in uniform field spark gaps. The insight gained led to the technique forming a major aspect of high voltage research.

After gaining the higher degree in 1955 David joined a research team in Ferranti Limited, Edinburgh developing an analogue computer for use in an aircraft guidance system. After two years, David returned to the University of Strathclyde as a lecturer in the Electrical Engineering Department and became the foundation Professor of Electrical Engineering (High Voltage) in 1972. Two years later he became the Head of Department and led a number of initiatives which contributed substantially to the growth of the Department into one of the largest and most successful in the UK. He was also involved in the establishment, development and management of one of the largest university electrical power research groups in the UK- designated as the Centre for Electrical Power Engineering (CEPE). The progress of this Centre demonstrated in reality his belief in the value of university and industrial collaboration.

As his career developed David emerged as a university statesman and took on many central university activities. He subsequently occupied senior academic positions and served as Vice Principal (1984-86) sandwiched between two terms as a deputy Principal (1982-1991). His effectiveness in handling difficult situations was due to his clear understanding of the objectives, a perfectionist approach to doing preparatory work, a willingness to let the conflicting parties air their cases, enormous amounts of patience and his good humour. In the latter three years he had special responsibility for International Affairs and in his new role he had the job of formulating overseas recruitment strategy, advising on policy generally and acting as chief global ambassador. As a result he became a true globetrotter and formulated, negotiated and signed many successful collaborative agreements in both teaching and research with leading universities, colleges and other overseas institutions.

David had extensive activities outside of the University of Strathclyde. Some representative examples include council member (1989-92) and then Vice-President (1992-95) of the Royal Society of Edinburgh where he served the learned institution with great enthusiasm and distinction. He was the first holder of the post of Chief Scientific Advisor to the Secretary of State for Scotland (1994-97) addressing policy and long term issues concerning science, engineering and technology. He was elected a member of the Council of the Institution of Electrical Engineers (1992-95). He became the Chairman of the Court of the University of Abertay and laid the foundation for its success in higher education. He was invited by the Hong Kong government to be one of five overseas members on the Planning Committee of its new university, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and he served on that University's first council. David was strongly committed to the idea that Science and Technology must contribute to the wellbeing of Scotland and he was actively involved in the work of Scottish Science Trust and the creation of the Science Centres. His broad knowledge and experience on educational matters led to him being much sought after by many organisations and his travels took him to Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, China and the USA. Where ever he went he was remembered as an academic ambassador for both the University of Strathclyde and the City of Glasgow.

David received a number of awards and these included the Order of the British Empire (OBE), the Institution of Electrical Engineers' Achievement Medal and Honorary DScs from Robert Gordon and Abertay Universities. It was the winning of the coveted decoration of the Order of Merit, Poland that gave him most pleasure. Ever since the collaborative relation between the Technical University of Łódź and Strathclyde University was signed in the late 1960s, David took on the responsibility to ensure that the link was live and beneficial to both parties. A task that was extremely demanding especially in the early days, but it provided a shining star in a darkened sky.

David could not have fulfilled all his multitude of commitments without the support of his wife, Mamie, who went to the same school but got to know David later. Mamie's role in 'Team Tedford' in their 48 years together ranged from caring for their daughter and three sons, cooking meals for the visitors and students that David regularly took to their home, and acting as a valuable source of social information and provider of latest gossip.

For those who knew David in various capacities they will miss his straight forward manner, high principle, honesty, good nature and wisdom.

Chengi Kuo

David John Tedford OBE, OM (Poland). BSc, PhD(Glasgow), ScD(Lodz), HonDTech(Abertay), HonDSc(Robert Gordon), DUniv, FUniv(Strathclyde). ARCST, CEng, FIEE, FInstP, SMIEEE, FRSA. Born 12 July 1931, elected FRSE 6 March 1978, died 11 November 2004.