

The Royal Society of Edinburgh

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Distinguished Diplomat to be next RSE President

Lord Wilson of Tillyorn, Governor of Hong Kong from 1987-1992, is to be the next President of The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE). Lord Wilson, KT, GCMG, KStJ, FRSE will take over as RSE President when Sir Michael Atiyah, one of the world's greatest mathematicians, demits office this October. The highly prestigious post of RSE President has been held by other such distinguished figures as Lord Kelvin and Sir Walter Scott. The post is unpaid; the term lasts for three years and always provides a six-month period of overlap for the incoming and outgoing Presidents. Currently Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge and Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen, Lord Wilson has achieved international distinction in a broad range of fields and is one of the United Kingdom's most eminent diplomats.



The current President of The Royal Society of Edinburgh, Sir Michael Atiyah, OM, FRS, PRSE, HonFREng, HonFFA, HonFMedSci who remains in office until October 2008 said:

I am delighted that Lord Wilson is to be the next President of The Royal Society of Edinburgh. Lord Wilson has a wealth of experience upon which to draw. As the Society's International Convener, Lord Wilson contributed greatly to the success and development of our work in enhancing Scotland's global collaboration. His leadership will help drive forward the public benefit activities of the Society, which I know he will take from strength to strength.

President-elect of The Royal Society of Edinburgh, Lord Wilson of Tillyorn, KT, GCMG, KStJ, FRSE said:

It is a great honour, and a great pleasure, to be elected to take over as President later this year from Sir Michael Atiyah. Over recent years the Royal Society of Edinburgh has established itself as the pre-eminent centre for serious discussion of key issues affecting Scotland and a wider world. I look forward to being able to help build on these foundations to enhance even further the role of the RSE both domestically and internationally.

Biography: David Wilson (Lord Wilson of Tillyorn)

David Wilson (Lord Wilson of Tillyorn) is Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge and Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen. He holds honorary doctorates from the Universities of Aberdeen, Sydney, Hong Kong, Abertay Dundee and the Chinese University of Hong Kong and is an Honorary Fellow of Keble College, Oxford. He was educated at Glenalmond College and did his National Service in The Black Watch. After Oxford he joined the Foreign Service, studied Chinese at the University of Hong Kong and served in Peking (1963-1965) and on the China Desk in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He resigned from the Foreign Service in 1968 and became Editor of the *China Quarterly*, at the School of Oriental and African Studies, from 1968-74, during which time he completed a PhD relating to a period of modern Chinese history. After re-joining the Foreign Service he served first in the Cabinet Office and then as Political Adviser to the Governor of Hong Kong (1977-81). He was later Assistant Under-Secretary of State at the FCO for Asia – Pacific and then, from 1987-1992, Governor of Hong Kong. On retirement from Public Service he became Chairman of Scottish Hydro-Electric (later Scottish and Southern Energy), from 1993-2000. For 8 years he was a member of the Board of the British Council and Chairman of the Scottish Committee. From 1992-2002 he was Chairman of the Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland and he has been a Trustee of the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland since 2000. He has been a Fellow of the RSE since 2000, and served on the Council for 2000-2001 and 2002-2004. He was Convenor of the International Committee from 2001-2002. He was a member of the British Mount Kongur Expedition (in Northwest China) in 1981 and his hobbies include hill walking, theatre and reading. He retires from the Mastership of Peterhouse at the end of June this year.

About the RSE

The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) is an educational charity, registered in Scotland. Independent and non-party-political, our wide-ranging educational activities include:

- Organising lectures, debates and conferences
- Conducting major independent inquiries
- Providing educational activities for school students throughout Scotland
- Distributing over £1.7 million to top researchers and entrepreneurs
- Showcasing to the World the best of our research and development
- Increasing two-way international exchange
- Encouraging, promoting and rewarding excellence
- Offering state-of-the-art conference facilities
- Publishing internationally respected learned journals

The RSE was founded in 1783 by Royal Charter for the “Advancement of Learning and Useful Knowledge”. Today it has around 1400 Fellows whose expertise encompasses the full spectrum of the sciences, medicine, engineering and technology, education, law, the arts, humanities, social sciences, business, industry, the professions and public service. This multi-disciplinary perspective makes the RSE unique amongst the United Kingdom’s learned societies. It is funded by a range of carefully selected charitable, public and private bodies. Its mission today is providing public benefit through the advancement of learning and useful knowledge.

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