

H/02/02/02

e-S: January 2015

The University of Edinburgh Electronic Senate January 2015

Special Minute

Stephen Gilbert Hillier

OBE BSc MSc PhD DSc FRCPATH FRCOG Emeritus Professor of Reproductive Endocrinology

Stephen Gilbert Hillier retired on 31 October 2014 after 30 years of service to the University of Edinburgh, including posts as Director of the NHS Reproductive Medicine Laboratory (for twenty years from 1985-2005), Honorary NHS Consultant Clinical Scientist (2005-2014), Director of the Graduate School of Life Sciences (1997-2002), Director of Postgraduate Studies and International Relations (DPSIR; 1997-2002), Director of the Centre for Reproductive Biology (2001-2007), and latterly as University Vice-Principal International (2008-2014).

Stephen Hillier was born in Hillingdon, Middlesex, England and educated at Hayes County Grammar School. He graduated from Leeds University in 1970, undertook a Masters at the same University in 1971 and conducted his PhD (awarded 1975) studies at the University of Wales, College of Medicine. He was awarded his DSc from the University of Edinburgh in 1992 and received his Membership and subsequently Fellowship from the Royal College of Pathologists in 1988 and 1997 respectively.

From 1976-1978 Stephen Hillier worked as post-doctoral Research Fellow at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Bethesda, Maryland, USA, funded by a prestigious Fogarty International Fellowship. He was mentored by Dr Griff T Ross and developed cell culture techniques to study endocrine and paracrine regulation of ovarian function in vitro. It was during this time in the USA that he established his life-long research collaboration and friendship with Dr AJ Zeleznik. Stephen Hillier returned to Europe as a tenured lecturer- equivalent at Leiden University Medical Centre (1978-1982), being lured by the opportunity to translate his basic research knowledge to human ovarian function.

From 1982-1985 Stephen Hillier worked at the Royal Post-graduate Medical School, Hammersmith Hospital where he collaborated with Professor (now Lord) Robert ML Winston in establishing one of the first successful in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) programmes in the United Kingdom. By 1985 they had established the first 100 IVF pregnancies.

In 1985 he moved to the University of Edinburgh Centre for Reproductive Biology because of its reputation as an international centre of excellence for research in reproductive medicine. He was appointed initially as Senior Lecturer and then as Professor of Reproductive Endocrinology (Promotion to a Personal Chair in 1994).

As DPSIR, he spearheaded introduction of online postgraduate teaching in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, including launch of the highly acclaimed Edinburgh Surgical Sciences Qualification (ESSQ). As Vice-Principal International, he led in creating the multidisciplinary Global Academies, of which the

Global Health Academy was first. His extensive administrative experience was paralleled by his intense personal commitment to teaching and research.

His 40-year long research career has included more than two decades of uninterrupted personal grant support, resulting in over 200 scholarly outputs (*h* index 50) and a prize-winning textbook (1996; *Scientific Essentials of Reproductive Medicine*). His research focus over the past four decades has elucidated the molecular and cellular signalling pathways that control ovarian function and the impact on fertility regulation and major disease processes in women, including ovarian cancer. His contributions have helped to explain why

women normally ovulate only one egg in each menstrual cycle, thereby leading to the design of safer and more effective methods for treating infertility. External recognition has included election (2009) to Fellowship of the Royal College of Obstetrics & Gynaecology *ad eundem*, in acknowledgement of his major contributions to the wellbeing of women. His particular expertise in translational steroid physiology and pharmacology has been central to many of the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine's (CMVM) strategic research themes (inflammation, cognition, cardiovascular sciences, reproductive health, cancer) and has provided a framework for innovative, cross-disciplinary teaching and research relevant to public/global health.

On his retirement Professor Stephen Hillier has been appointed as an Honorary Professorial Fellow in order that he may continue to contribute to postgraduate teaching and research, along with continuing to chair the University's Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Board. Additionally, his continued external involvement and his past expertise as journal editor, learned society chair, Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority (HFEA) member, University Vice-Principal, qualify him to continue to act as an eminent 'ambassador' for the CMVM and wider university as an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) on 31 December 2014 in recognition of his services to international higher education.

We hope Stephen will ensure that he now protects time to enjoy his much loved pastime of fly-fishing as well as time with his family. We wish Stephen and his wife Haideh the very best for the future.