



Ambassador's Activities

2012

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Speech by HE Bernard Emié,
French Ambassador to the United Kingdom

Award of the insignia of *Officier* in the *Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur*
and of *Chevalier* in the *Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*
to Sir David Edward

Edinburgh, 17 November 2012

Cher Sir David

Consul General,

Friends,

I'm very happy, Sir David, to present to you this morning, at the Free French House in Edinburgh, the insignia of *Officier* in the *Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur* and *Chevalier* in the *Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*.

It's a solemn moment in the life of a friend of France to be awarded the insignia of our most prestigious national order, created by Napoleon Bonaparte to reward the exceptional services rendered by its recipient to the French nation.

Today this ceremony is all the more special because I'm also going to present you with the insignia of *Chevalier* in the *Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*, which recognizes people "who have distinguished themselves by their creativity in the artistic and literary fields or for their contribution to the influence of the arts in France and throughout the world". It is a high distinction which – in the words of André Malraux, the famous man of letters and General de Gaulle's Minister of Culture – is "respected and coveted by artists, writers and creative professionals".

This exceptional double reward reflects your tireless work for Franco-Scottish friendship and the French language.

Before awarding you these insignia, allow me, *cher* Sir David, to go back over your remarkable and brilliant career, dedicated to the service of justice and the European cause.

You were born on 14 November 1934 in Perth, former capital of the kings of Scotland. It was probably your origins in this gateway city at the mouth of the Tay that gave you your open-mindedness and your passion for building a European legal system to bring all Europeans closer together.

Called to the Bar in 1962, you were appointed Queen's Counsel in 1974. You were Clerk and then Treasurer of the Scottish Faculty of Advocates, and you represented it at the Consultative Committee of the Bars and Law Societies of the European Community, of which you were President from 1978 until 1980.

Your attraction to Europe was already very strong, and you were Salvesen Professor of European Institutions and Director of the Europa Institute at Edinburgh University's School of Law from 1985 to 1989. During this time you were Specialist Adviser to the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Communities.

In 1989 you were one of the inaugural judges of the newly-created European Court of First Instance, and you then served as the British judge at the European Court of Justice, European law's supreme body, from 1992 to 2004.

Today you barely have time to enjoy your well-deserved retirement, which – as your character naturally demands – is a very active one. Among other things, you are a temporary judge at the Court of Session in Scotland, a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, a Privy Counsellor, Chairman of the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland and of the Scottish Council of Independent Schools, Honorary Fellow of University College, Oxford,

and Honorary President of the Scottish Arbitration Centre. And I'm not sure this is an exhaustive list of all your activities!

Cher Sir David,

You're a Scot and a Briton but above all strongly pro-European. As a Francophile, you've championed the French language throughout your eminent career in the European institutions.

You've always used our language in your public speeches and statements, and you're committed to maintaining French as a key language of the law. Indeed, you've sometimes voiced regret about not always encountering the same determination among your French colleagues! Sadly this is often the case in many international institutions.

You told me how much these awards would have pleased your father who, as you said, planted in your mind and your thoughts a love of France and the French-speaking world. And your other loved ones are proud of them too: your wife Elizabeth, who has supported you throughout your remarkable career – these awards are, in a way, also hers – and your children. Your son John likes to point out that one of your guiding principles – at least as far as European affairs are concerned – is Robert Schuman's extremely perceptive, noble phrase in the founding declaration of 9 May 1950:

“Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity.”

You remain committed to France today through the Franco-Scottish Society, of which you have been President since 1996. This association of Francophones and Francophiles, which has many branches throughout Scotland (Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen, Helensburgh, St Andrews), promotes understanding and exchanges – school and university exchanges in particular – between France and Scotland (just as its counterpart, the *Association Franco-Ecossaise*, does in France).

Like our predecessors, the Consul General and I personally appreciate the effectiveness of the Franco-Scottish Society and the impact it has, and I look forward to the discussions I'm going to be having there this very afternoon. I remember, too, that it was you who welcomed me to the University of Edinburgh in September last year, when I delivered a lecture on my first official visit to Scotland.

Cher Sir David,

Today, through me, the French Republic pays tribute to your commitment to our country and the place of French in Europe. Your appointment to the rank of *Officier* in the *Ordre de la Légion d'Honneur* and *Chevalier* in the *Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* symbolizes the excellent relations between France and Scotland, to which you have hugely contributed. I congratulate you on this and thank you for it.

David Edward, au nom du Président de la République (et en vertu des pouvoirs qui nous sont conférés), nous vous faisons officier dans l'Ordre national de la Légion d'Honneur.

David Edward, au nom du Ministre de la Culture, nous vous faisons chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettes, et nous vous donnons l'accolade./.