



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## *News Release*

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### **Political pioneer's legacy to inform debate on future of democracy**

The future of democracy – both in the UK and abroad – will be explored at an event on Thursday (1 March) that acknowledges the influence of a pioneering politician.

The event at the Scottish Parliament will mark 40 years since the death of John P Mackintosh, the former Labour MP often referred to as the “father of devolution”.

The debate, titled *Where now for democracy?* has been organised by the University of Edinburgh, where Professor Mackintosh was a professor of politics until his death at the age of 48.

Professor Mackintosh's advocacy of the UK joining the then European Community, as well as his support for Scottish devolution put him at odds with his party, but won him admirers from across the political spectrum.

The late First Minister of Scotland, Donald Dewar, described him as “something of a prophet, a mighty champion of reform at a time when constitutional change was not an approved and certainly not a fashionable cause”.

The John P Mackintosh Memorial Debate will see a distinguished panel of politicians and commentators discuss his legacy and ask what the future holds for good government.

The first two Presiding Officers of the Scottish Parliament, former Liberal Party leader Lord David Steel and former SNP MP and MSP, Sir George Reid will be joined by journalist Polly Toynbee of *The Guardian* and Professor Mona Siddiqui, Assistant Principal Religion and Society at the University of Edinburgh.

Chairing the debate will be Ken Macintosh MSP, the Scottish Parliament's Presiding Officer.

The event, which is open to the public and ticketed, takes place in the Scottish Parliament's Debating Chamber on Thursday, 1 March, from 6 to 7.30pm. It will be followed by a reception, which will be addressed by the new Principal of the University of Edinburgh, Professor Peter Mathieson.

For further information please contact:

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