

4th John Pearce Memorial Lecture 2018

Baroness Glenys Thornton outlined how social enterprise can have a positive impact on people's lives at the annual John Pearce Memorial Lecture at Glasgow Caledonian University.

More than 200 guests attended the 2018 lecture held in honour of one of the most influential figures in community enterprise in the UK.

Labour's Shadow Health Minister in the House of Lords delivered this year's keynote address, which was part of the programme for an academic symposium, organised by the Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health, ahead of the Social Enterprise World Forum 2018.

Baroness Thornton, who has spent 40 years working with co-operative, social and community organisations, said: "John was one of the people who laid the foundations for the social enterprise movement in Scotland and across the UK.

"He persuaded people to set up innovations and businesses to support their communities, create jobs, give people control over their lives, and save communities that were under threat, he was remarkable.

"The Yunus Centre, here at GCU, does great work. It's important work because it allows a connection to be made with what happens on the ground and what happens across the world."

Professor Cam Donaldson, Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise and Co-Director of the Yunus Centre, said: "John Pearce spent his working life developing creative, community-led solutions to challenges facing urban and rural communities.

"Upon his retirement and just prior to his death in 2011, John donated his papers to the special collections at GCU.

"A special benefit arising from such a generous donation is that I, along with my colleagues and members of the public who never met him, will have the chance to learn from John."

The work to preserve the Pearce archive at Glasgow Caledonian University has been funded by donations from the social enterprise and business communities, a grant from the University and awards from the Medical Research Council and Economic & Social Research Council.

Professor Pamela Gillies, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of GCU, said: "Supporting, facilitating and researching Social Enterprise sits at the very heart of our social mission as the University for the Common Good.

"It is why we are delighted, on our campus, to honour the memory of a remarkable and inspirational person, John Pearce."

Guests from the USA, Canada, Australia, Thailand and across Europe have been on campus this week for a two-day symposium to discuss how academia can advance social enterprise teaching, research and community engagement across the globe.