

Prof marks 80th birthday with new books

Written by Donald Fullarton - Last Updated Monday, 18 November 2013 18:18



A PROFESSOR of politics who is a long-time Helensburgh resident marked his 80th birthday this year with the publication of his 41st and 42nd books.

'Representing Europe: A Pragmatic Approach', published by Oxford University Press and written by Professor Richard Rose, charts how the European Union has a democratic imbalance — not enough chances for citizens to influence Brussels, but lots of chances to influence national governments whose decisions in Brussels they dislike.

This will be followed in December by the book-length memoir 'Learning about Politics in Time

and Space', to be published by the University of Essex ECPR Press, Colchester. It has a supporting website <http://www.profrose.eu/> .

Professor Rose, who has lived in East Abercromby Street since 1967, has written more than three-quarters of his books enjoying the view of an old Helensburgh garden.

He was born in St Louis, Missouri, on April 8 1933, and was educated at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, where he gained a BA. At first he contemplated a career in journalism.

But after working in public relations and then as a reporter for the St Louis Post-Dispatch, he left to go to Oxford University, thinking he was leaving journalism, and found he was the only one who could type. He took his doctorate there.

He was a Lecturer in Government at Manchester University from 1961-6 before moving to Strathclyde University in Glasgow and becoming Professor of Politics and founder of the Centre for the Study of Public Policy, the first public policy think tank in a European university.

From 2005-2011 he was Professor at Aberdeen University, and he returned to Strathclyde in 2012 as a research professor.

Professor Rose has also been associated with many other learned institutions including Johns Hopkins, the Wissenschaftszentrum in Berlin, the Central European University in Prague, and he is currently Visiting Professor at the European University Institute. He has also been a resident at various Washington DC think tanks and consultant to the World Bank.

He has been a prolific producer of books and articles, at the last count well over 400, on a wide and varied range of subjects. His research topics have included the Northern Ireland conflict, European Union enlargement, democratisation, elections, and presidents and prime ministers. Currently he is researching the experience of corruption worldwide in collaboration with Transparency International Berlin.

His work spans many areas of political science, but his contribution to electoral studies has been especially innovative. He produced early and important work on British voting, notably his study of the 1959 general election with David Butler, his 1960 book with Mark Abrams, 'Must Labour Lose?', and his 1967 study, 'Influencing Voters: A Study in Campaign Rationality'.

His work on comparative electoral behaviour is no less important. His 1974 edited book, 'Electoral Behaviour: a Comparative Handbook', was the first systematic cross-national study of electoral behaviour.

His work in the 1960s and early 1970s on social cleavages, parties and electoral systems generated much research and debate and remain important benchmark studies to this day.

Less well known is his key role in establishing many of the international bodies in political science now taken for granted. He was a co-founder of the European Consortium for Political Research, and between 1970 and 1985 he was secretary of the Committee on Political Sociology of the International Political Science Association.

He co-founded the British Politics Group, the largest organised section of the American Political Science Association, and remained on the executive committee for 22 years.

Also less well known is Richard Rose's mentoring of generations of political scientists, many of whom studied under him at the University of Strathclyde. He also gave generously of his time to many visiting scholars and academics from around the world, providing much advice and encouragement.

His work has been translated into 17 languages, he has given seminar and conference papers in 45 countries, and he has contributed to all the major newspapers in Britain and America, as well as frequently working as an election expert and broadcaster for TV and radio, sitting next to the late Alastair Burnet before being replaced by a computer, and being interviewed by Colin Mackay and Gordon Brown on STV.

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In 2007 he was one of a small group of experts selected to offer the then American president, George W. Bush, a fresh perspective of the situation in Iraq. Given three minutes to put his point across, he related the Iraqi position to that of Northern Ireland in 1969.

A divided society, he told the president, quoting Max Weber, 'can be a stable society — provided that there is a state that has a monopoly of the institutions of violence and prevents foreign and armed incursions across its borders'. The implication was that until that condition was met, the Iraqi problem would persist.

He was made a Foreign Member of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters in 1985, Honorary Vice-President of the Political Studies Association in 1986, a Fellow of the British Academy in 1992, an Honorary Foreign Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1994, and a Fellow of the Academy of Learned Societies for the Social Sciences in 2000.

He was awarded the Lasswell Lifetime Achievement Award, named after Harold Lasswell by the Policy Studies Organisation, based in Washington, in 1999, and the following year he received another Lifetime Achievement Award, this time from Britain's Political Studies Association. In 2005 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by Örebro University in Sweden.

The year 2009 saw Professor Rose win a hat-trick of prestigious awards. He was awarded the Sir Isaiah Berlin Prize for Lifetime Contribution to political studies at the annual luncheon of the Political Studies Association of the UK in November.

The citation noted not only the innovative books that he had written over half a century but also his role in helping younger members of the profession and in establishing professional networks such as the European Consortium for Political Research and the British Politics Group of the American Political Science Association.

The Sir Isaiah Berlin judges said of him: "Professor Richard Rose was the jury's unanimous choice for the award. Over his long professional life, spanning almost five decades, his contribution to the field of political studies has been phenomenal.

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"He has been extraordinarily prolific. Many of his works are essential reading and help to define the discipline across a number of subjects including, but not confined to, comparative parties and elections, the politics of the UK, the growth of government, and comparative public policy. He has contributed significantly to the development of political studies as a profession."

Ten weeks earlier, at the biennial conference of the European Consortium for Political Research at Potsdam, near Berlin, he received the Mattei Dogan Foundation Prize for work in European Political Sociology.

The prize recognised more than four decades of publishing on political sociology in countries ranging from Japan and Ireland to Western and Eastern Europe and Russia.

The first of the three awards came early in the year when he received a lifetime achievement award for his work in promoting electoral studies from the International Committee for the Study of Comparative Elections.

In 2010 Professor Rose was awarded an honorary doctorate by the European University Institute, Florence, Europe's leading institutions for doctoral education in the social sciences.

A Political Studies Association award is named after him. The Richard Rose Prize is awarded annually to a scholar under 40 years of age making a distinctive contribution to the study of British politics.

He and his wife Rosemary Jane have three children, a daughter Clare, who lives in Winchester, a son Charles, who lives in Glasgow, and a son Lincoln, who lives in New York.