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**For immediate release**

**SCOTTISH POLAR EXPLORER HONOURED FOR SERVICES TO EDUCATION**

Craig Mathieson, Scotland's greatest living polar explorer and founder of the charity, The Polar Academy that helps transform the life-chances of 'invisible' youths in schools, has been recognised (5 July) for his contribution to education with an Honorary Doctorate from Abertay University.

Bo'ness based Craig, who in 2013 established his charity with the aim of using exploration to positively transform the lives of youths affected by crushed self confidence, low self esteem and anxiety, was one of three honorary graduates and among more than 750 students who received awards at the ceremony held in the Caird Hall in Dundee.

49 year-old Craig (pictured), who left school at 16 to join the military with minimal qualifications, took the opportunity to impart some sage advice to the assembled young graduates. He told them: "I was 12 years old when (inspired by the exploits of Captain Scott), I decided to become a polar explorer.

"Unfortunately, being a polar explorer is not part of any career choice at high school or university. I had to work extremely hard for many years to eventually succeed.

"Along the way, I met many people who told me what I couldn't do, or who said that what I wanted to do was just too difficult. You (graduates) will also regularly meet these people in life. I've always found it best to deal with these people by thanking them for their 'terrific' advice, look them straight in the eye, smile, shake their hand ... and then disregard everything they've told you and stick to your original plan!"

Craig, who as part of his work with The Polar Academy has spoken on RRS Discovery and to students at the Dundee Academy of Sport, added: "I'm extremely proud to receive this Honorary Doctorate from Abertay University and hopefully it reflects the tremendous ongoing work of The Polar Academy.

"I firmly believe that with perseverance and resilience, you can achieve anything in life. Over 30 years ago I was being told by a guidance teacher to forget my dream of being an explorer. Yet I've never given up. Three decades later and with the help of many supporters and charitable donors, including Tiso Group and Cornhill Building Services, I am able to help transform the lives of young people, nurture the self-confidence to safely explore in the Arctic and ensure they return to inspire their peers."

Thursday's graduation ceremony also rounded-off a year of success for Abertay, which has seen the university named number one in Europe for computer games education by the prestigious Princeton Review and ranked top modern university in Scotland by the Guardian University Guide.

[www.thepolaracademy.org](http://www.thepolaracademy.org)

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