

**Tuesday, 25 September 2018**

## **INSPIRATIONAL STUDENT ILISA STACK OUTLINES HER SUCCESSFUL JOURNEY AT COLLEGES SCOTLAND'S PARLIAMENTARY RECEPTION**

Colleges Scotland held its parliamentary reception on Tuesday evening in the Members' Room and highlighted the importance of colleges to delivering inclusive economic growth and meeting the needs of learners and employers post-Industry 4.0.

Iain Gray MSP sponsored the event on behalf of Colleges Scotland and both he and the newly-appointed Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science, Richard Lochhead MSP, delivered speeches to the 150-strong audience of college students, staff members, stakeholders and Members of the Scottish Parliament.

Closing the parliamentary event, Ilisa Stack outlined her incredible journey, which is detailed further below.

Shona Struthers, Chief Executive of Colleges Scotland, who also addressed the assembled guests, said:

"Scotland's colleges have an incredible depth and variation to them and whether that comes from access level courses to degrees, professional development, or Modern Apprenticeships, college learners have diverse requirements. It is through their flexibility that colleges provide high-quality courses which meet the needs of learners, communities and employers.

"We were absolutely thrilled to introduce Ilisa Stack so that everyone could hear her inspirational story. Ilisa was only 15 years old when she left school and over 15 years later enrolled in photography evening classes as a mature student at City of Glasgow College, and by that time she was the mother of three children. That led to her gaining an HND in Photography and then receiving a First-class Honours degree in Photography in November from the college.

"Out of 13,000 entries, her image was chosen as a Portrait of Britain winner and will be seen by millions across the UK as it is now being displayed on high streets, in train stations and on bus stops. Incredibly, Ilisa's work will be exhibited in Berlin's Aff Gallery next month, which is an amazing achievement.

"Ilisa personifies the transformational capacity of colleges and demonstrates just how crucial they are in helping so many people improve their lives right across Scotland's communities. Her story is the very essence of what the college sector typifies: providing people with terrific opportunities to help them reach their potential and improve their lives."

Portrait of Britain winner and City of Glasgow College graduate, Ilisa Stack, said:

"My journey at City of Glasgow College started with evening photography classes. I then went on to complete my HND and gain a First-class BA Honours degree in Photography at the college. It has totally transformed my life. From leaving school at 15 and to getting to where I am now, with my work being exhibited in the Aff Gallery in Berlin, is amazing. Studying at college has helped me to achieve my dreams as a photographer and artist.

"I'm eternally grateful to City of Glasgow College for helping me develop my photography skills. I have grown so much as a person, built up my confidence and now I'm trying to give something back

to students by sharing what I have learnt through my experiences and passing on advice whenever I can.”

### **Ilisa Stack’s background:**

Ilisa Stack is Colleges Scotland’s inspirational student at our Parliamentary Reception on Tuesday, 25 September 2018 and will be speaking at the event in the Members’ Room.



Ilisa Stack (39) graduated with a BA (hons) Photography from City of Glasgow College in November 2017. Her story from leaving school at 15 to returning as a mature student with a family is humbling. She started doing evening photography classes at City of Glasgow College which, after 18 months, progressed to studying and achieving an HND in photography at the college. In November 2017, Ilisa received a 1st class Honours degree in Photography from City of Glasgow College and her degree projects have gone on to receive national and international recognition. She photographs Glasgow youths, showing them as noble characters, and she has been interviewed for [Document Scotland](#).

She is one of the winners of this year’s Portrait of Britain competition. Her work was selected from 13,000 entries to make the final 100 images to be selected for publication in the book and also shown on billboards across the country. She has also been shortlisted for the Scottish Portrait Awards and her work will be exhibited at the [Aff Galerie](#) in Berlin in October and November 2018. Her work can also be seen on Instagram.

Ilisa is a true inspiration and speaks about her time at the college with complete delight and honesty. She is a great ambassador for what can be achieved through support and self-belief.

**Instagram:** [www.instagram.com/ilisa\\_stack/](http://www.instagram.com/ilisa_stack/)

**Website:** [www.istackphotography.com](http://www.istackphotography.com)

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