

MCALPINE WELCOMES THE INCLUSION OF DUMFRIESSHIRE FAIR TRADE PIONEER LORNA YOUNG

Joan McAlpine MSP has welcomed the inclusion Dumfriesshire Fair trade pioneer Lorna Young in the new Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women

Lorna, who died in 1996, is one of 180 new entries in the dictionary, which is launched today in Edinburgh. It celebrates and commemorates the lives of individual Scottish women whose actions have influenced the course of history.

Ms McAlpine has also written a parliamentary motion celebrating Lorna's work.

She said:

"I first heard about Lorna from her close school friend at Lockerbie Academy Isabelle Gow. She was a remarkable woman who changed the lives of so many people around the world. She deserves this recognition."

Lorna, a former pupil of Langholm and Lockerbie Academy, was the first sales director in 1991 of Café Direct, a company founded by Oxfam to give farmers in the developing world a fair price for their crop. The company re-invests 60% of its profits in improving the lives of producers in South America and Africa. It was the first Fair Trade product to really make and impact in the UK.

Lorna Young was able to persuade supermarket chains to stock Café Direct for the first time. The Fair Trade movement was then in its infancy. Lorna played a major role in exposing the terrible poverty endured by farmers who did not get a decent price for their commercial crop.

She suffered from a serious congenital heart condition and died at the age of 44. Letters from farmers in South America were read at her funeral thanking Lorna for the difference she had made to their lives.

The Lorna Young Foundation was established in 2003 to continue her work improving the lives of poor farmers as well as disadvantaged groups in the UK. The charity's programmes includes "Farmer Radio" which reaches 6 million people in Africa. The radio service, along with text messaging, gives farmers essential information about weather conditions, crop management and market prices.

Ms McAlpine added: “It is often said history is written by men and the contribution of women is often erased. That is of course changing – and the Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women is evidence of that change.”

The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women is published by Edinburgh University Press
<https://edinburghuniversitypress.com/book-the-new-biographical-dictionary-of-scottish-women.html>

The Lorna Young Foundation website is here <http://www.lyf.org.uk/programmes/smallholder-peer-support-network/>