

Dr Frank Armstrong – Biography



I grew up and attended primary and secondary school in Edinburgh. I am a proud graduate of the University of Edinburgh in Biochemistry and Medicine, particularly in this year of the 300th anniversary of the Medical School.

Edinburgh Medical School transformed my life in more ways than one; I met my wife Jill at Medical School as we dissected on adjacent bodies! She worked as a GP, is now retired, and we live in the West End of Edinburgh. We have 2 adult children, Chris and Clare

After graduation I worked in clinical practice in hospital medicine, passed the Membership of the Royal College of Physicians (UK) exam and taught clinical students at the University of Edinburgh. I was interested in clinical research and the development of new medicines, so I pursued a career in the Pharma and Biotechnology industries where I was involved with new treatments for cancer, infection, asthma and more recently with gene and cell therapies for rare diseases. Through my career I have been passionate about the application of science to improve patient care and their families experience of healthcare

We left Edinburgh in 1985 and lived in London, Europe and the US where I was an executive in large companies, attended INSEAD business school and then transitioned to be the CEO of several Biotech companies. For the last 15 years I have worked as a Director of University spinout and small companies in life sciences, with investors and I have always reserved time to work in the not-for-profit sector where I can apply my skills and experience to worthwhile organisations. e.g. I have been the chair of an HIV/ AIDs charity in Uganda, a prisoner reform charity and worked in microfinance in Africa. Working for a variety of organisations in a range of countries has influenced me to learn from people in different cultures, adapt my style and to be open to new approaches and ideas.

We moved back to Edinburgh in 2017 which has enabled me to become a trustee of the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh and of St Pauls and St Georges Church. I have been a member of the Court of the University of Edinburgh for 8 years and convened the Estates Committee. These experiences have developed my knowledge of the Higher Education Sector. Recently I have become Chair of Edinburgh Innovations, the University's commercialisation Service.

I work part time, with the opportunity to take on roles where I can meaningfully contribute to organisations that benefit society and ensure others have opportunity and support to succeed. To balance work, I am an avid padel tennis (delighted the Sports Union has started a club) and pickleball player, a Formula 1 fan, an enthusiastic follower of modern Scottish music, a supporter of our city cultural life and a dog lover.