

Good morning my friends and many thanks to you all for being here this morning.

My name is Brahma Mohanty, I am the Managing Director of the Oxford Guild, and a graduate of Kellogg College, at the University of Oxford. My colleague Mr Abbas Kazmi, Chair of the Oxford Guild, sends his sincerest apologies for being unable to attend this morning, but extends his best wishes to you all.

Before I continue, I want to place on record my thanks firstly, to the staff here at the National Football Museum for hosting this event in such an appropriate and awe-inspiring setting. Special thanks also go to Mr Dave Edwards, the Venue Sales Manager here at the Museum, and to Mr Tim Desmond, Chief Executive of the Museum. My thanks also to everyone at the Sir Bobby Charlton Foundation and, to Ms Donna Moss-Seymour (COO of the Foundation), Ms Jane Bateman, Trustee of the Foundation, and Mr Stephen Cross, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, to whom I will be presenting the award shortly. I would like to also extend my thanks to everyone at Manchester United Football Club for their support of the Foundation and to anyone else who I may have forgotten, as well as the family and friends of Sir Bobby, and of course, to the man himself who we are here to celebrate today. Everyone at the Oxford Guild sends our best wishes to Sir Bobby.

The Oxford Guild is one of the University of Oxford's oldest and largest societies, with a long and distinguished history. Over the years, we have been the foremost student society for connecting our members with the highest profile organisations and individuals across a diverse set of career fields be it in business, consulting, finance, and law to name but a few. We also have an unrivalled reputation for hosting stellar guests and speakers, who visit the university to share their inspirational experiences and stories with our members and to motivate them to achieve the highest of standards. 'The Oxonian Award' seeks to build on the Oxford Guild's esteemed history by recognising those individuals who have made an outstanding contribution in their field and beyond. 'The Oxonian Award', (Oxonian, the Latin term for students and alumni of the university (as well as residents of the City of Oxford)), embodies the values our members hold dear: to achieve the highest of standards and make an exceptional contribution to society. We seek to recognise those outstanding individuals from a wide range of fields and backgrounds, and we are delighted to welcome Sir Bobby Charlton CBE to our inaugural cohort of recipients of this

prestigious honour, which includes Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and Former US President Jimmy Carter.

Indeed, before we go further, I must state on record that never in my years as a lifelong Manchester City fan, that I ever thought I would be stood here on my birthday celebrating a Manchester United legend, but there we go. Sorry just a bit of cross-city football banter.

But where would you begin to sum the incredible life and career of a legend like Sir Bobby Charlton? Sir Bobby is undoubtedly one of English and World Football's greatest icons. Born in October 1937 in Ashington, Northumberland to Robert "Bob", and Elizabeth "Cissie" Charlton, Sir Bobby hailed from a family of professional footballers on his mother's side and credited much of his early career development to his grandfather and mother. His elder brother Jack would also go onto become a distinguished professional footballer and international manager, and together Bobby and Jack would both go on to be amongst the most famous sporting siblings in history.

A chance encounter with a chief scout from Manchester United and after appearances for England Schoolboys, Sir Bobby would sign as an amateur with the Red Devils at the age of fifteen on 1st January 1953, before turning professional in October of the following year, with the club he would later become synonymous with. Under the tutelage of the legendary Sir Matt Busby (a former Manchester City FA Cup winner 😊), he would form a part of the famous Busby Babes of emerging and talented young footballers, rebuilding the club post the Second World War, and establishing the club as a force before domestically and across the continent, as Manchester United became the first English club to compete in the European Cup (better known as the UEFA Champions League today).

However, the events of one fateful evening in Munich on 6th February 1958 would leave an imprint not only on Sir Bobby, but on Manchester United, world football, the country and many around the world. Twenty-three people would tragically lose their lives when a British European Airways Flight crashed after an attempted take off. Amongst those who perished were the Co-pilot Captain Kenneth Rayment, Manchester United club staff Walter Crickmer, Tom Curry, and Bert Whalley, former England and Manchester City Goalkeeper turned journalist Frank Swift, journalist Donny Davies, and players, Geoff Bent, Roger Byrne, Eddie Colman, Duncan Edwards, Mark Jones, David Pegg, Tommy Taylor, Billy Whelan. The tragedy not only derailed United's title ambitions that season

but devastated the nucleus of young and promising side well on the way to become one of the greatest squads of players in English football history. It would require immense determination and fortitude for Sir Matt, Sir Bobby, and a squad of talented players to rebuild the club over a period of ten years, culminating in Manchester United defeating Benfica in the 1968 European Cup Final at Wembley Stadium, with Sir Bobby capping an emotionally-charged evening by scoring twice in a 4-1 win after extra time. The squad was epitomised by the United Trinity of Sir Bobby and his team-mates, George Best and Denis Law (also a former Manchester City great 😊). By the time his career at Old Trafford ended, Sir Bobby had collected THREE league title, an FA Cup, TWO Charity Shields, and a European Cup and to this day remains one of the club's highest goal scorers, and appearance holders.

He would also later go on to represent Preston North End, Waterford, Newcastle KB United, Perth Azzuri and Blacktown City as a player, as well as briefly managing both Preston North End and Wigan Athletic.

However, it was not only in club football where Sir Bobby would forge his legacy, but also donning the Three Lions of the England national team, being named in the England squad for the 1958, 1962, 1966 and 1970 World Cups. And of course my friends, it was at the 1966 World Cup on home soil where Sir Bobby alongside colleagues including the late Bobby Moore, Martin Peters, Gordon Banks, Sir Geoff Hurst, and his brother Jack he would reach the pinnacle of the global game, as England defeated rivals West Germany 4-2 after extra time on 30th July 1966 to lift the FIFA World Cup in front of a raucous Wembley crowd. On that day Sir Alf Ramsey's men become immortals and produced one of British sport's finest moments, and one that still stands the test of time and a timely reminder, as we approach the start of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in just a few days. I am sure speak on behalf of my colleagues and members of the Oxford Guild, and everyone here in wishing the England team and of course the Wales team the absolute best in the coming weeks.

Of course much has been said in the build up to this tournament regarding human rights and respect for all regardless of background and I know that this is something that Sir Bobby and the foundation that bears his name, holds very true to heart, and I want to take this moment to express our solidarity with those continuing the fight and advocacy for these precious values that should of course be a right for all, not a privilege, all around the world.

Sir Bobby remains amongst one of the elite few record-holding England cap winners, as well as goal-scorers, and capped off a memorable 1966 by winning the Ballon d'Or, cementing himself amongst the greatest footballers in history.

Even in retirement, Sir Bobby's love and passion for the game would never wane, and he would go on to establish the famous Bobby Charlton Soccer Schools giving youngsters a bright start in the game and indeed, another Manchester United and England great David Beckham would be amongst many to cut his teeth there. Beyond the game, Sir Bobby had love for wider communities and societies and the ability to transform and regenerate communities. One of the greatest examples of this was his pivotal role in Manchester's successful bid to host the 2002 Commonwealth Games. This for me has particular significance as I volunteered at the games alongside my late father and I witnessed first hand just what an impact the Games had on transforming the city, particularly in the aftermath of the devastating IRA bombing of 1996. The success of the games was indeed the blueprint that no doubt led to London securing the 2012 Olympics, and for the UK hosting two further editions of the Games, as well as other major sporting events. Whilst he may have been born and raised in Northumberland, Sir Bobby is very much a part of the fabric of this wonderful City of Manchester which many including myself are proud to call home. His efforts both on and off the pitch have served to promote the city far beyond these shores and he continues to be one of the city's (and country's) beloved figures, transcending his field and even footballing divides.

Sir Bobby's passion and love for communities, humanity, and society, stretches far beyond the borders of these British Isles, and that is truly embodied by the foundation that bears his name; with a commitment towards promoting international development and championing the human rights we take for granted, but that some continue to struggle for. The tireless work of those associated with the foundation ensures that Sir Bobby's dedication and values remain as a voice for those who cannot be heard, and a vehicle for social change around the world.

Whether it's inspiring future England internationals or the current Three Lions in upcoming tournaments, or the Lionesses building upon a historic 2022 campaign, to future generations at both Manchester United and Manchester City and other clubs across the region and country, to the many stands and tributes bearing his name, to his legacy of a proud adopted son of Manchester, his glittering collection of awards and honours, to his tireless championing of

charity, philanthropy and human rights through his foundation, Sir Bobby Charlton is truly an icon of the game and beloved “gentleman” of world football. No matter what happens with future players and teams, his achievements will hold steadfast and will remain a testament to just what can be achieved by playing the game you love in with passion and determination, and respect for your team-mates, fellow players, mentors and indeed for your fellow global citizens. There will never be another like Sir Bobby Charlton.

And with that it gives me immense pleasure and honour to award this Oxonian Award for Lifetime Achievement to our latest recipient, Sir Bobby Charlton CBE, on behalf of the Executive Committee and members of the Oxford Guild.

Many congratulations to you Sir Bobby.