

## George Goudsmit Lifetime Achievement Award Speech

Thank you, thank you, thank you very much for this incredible surprise, a huge surprise. It is a wonderful surprise, thank you very much. Thanks to the judges, so nice to come across a few benevolent ones. Thanks to SMA, those wonderful inverterers. Thanks to the AES team, without you I wouldn't be standing here.... Nor without my parents..... Actually, my father already had energy in his awareness. He had tank wagons collecting used car engine oil from garages throughout Holland. He had refinery turning the waste oil into aviation fuel, so a sort of upcycling of oil.

A whole life time.... Actually my lifetime that started quite a while ago.... when I was very little.

I am so honoured to be here tonight and very grateful to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award. I am incredibly humbled to have my commitment to the industry recognised in this way. Receiving this makes me reflect upon my career – the sort of thing you do when you're my age!.... When I started in this industry about 180 years ago solar thermal was the only solar technology readily available on the market, things look very different now. For starters...., I wouldn't stand here staring at all of you.....! However, I always imagined great things for this industry. I knew I was doing the right thing by taking up the reins of AES Solar.

I was immediately attracted to the company. In thinking about the part I could be playing in the roll-out of our sustainable industry, I imagined that everyone would benefit from our industry. That prospect was incredibly attractive. And here we are.... Doing it.....!!!

I took over AES Solar in 1889, I mean 1989, when it was still primarily based in the Findhorn Foundation ecovillage in the North East of Scotland. We have since moved into the neighbouring town of Forres and have stayed very close to both our geographical and ethical roots.

At the time, we were a solar thermal collector manufacturer, one of the first in Western Europe, we predicted and embraced the popularity of solar PV. In 1995 we completed our first grid-connected PV installation which is fully operational to this day, providing a rather enviable energy bill.

The fact that we operate from our headquarters in the North of Scotland so successfully, has always been a great pride of mine. We have had to work hard to become an influential player in the industry to overcome these geographical challenges. I would say we have achieved that and some. Even though it almost always rains in Scotland.

One of my highlights was meeting Her Majesty the Queen at a party on the Scilly Island that resulted in the installation of a solar system for her at Balmoral. AES also won the local duck race. Our large rubber duck, Charly, came racing down the Findhorn river and made it within a feather's tip.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank a couple of key players who have supported my journey.

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Firstly Lyle Schnadt who founded AES Solar back in 1979. With the encouragement of Kerr MacGregor of Napier University, he developed our high performance solar thermal system. Without his innovation, I would not be standing here today.

Secondly, the brilliant Professor Sue Roaf who was so kind as to accompany me to this little party you are throwing for me here, for her fantastic long-term support and guidance throughout all these years as Non-Executive Director of AES Solar.

I also extend my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the team at AES Solar as well as our wonderful clients and partners, without their help, none of this would have been possible. I thank each one of them for helping me reach a stage where I can proudly hold up this award. It as a mark of our achievement.

It is a great honour for me to stand in front of you all tonight as we all strive to make the world a better place. When I examine the achievements of the solar and storage industry over the past thirty plus years, I realise there is so much we can be proud of. These awards tell us a lot about our industry. And from where I'm standing – the future looks very bright.

Sorry Dad, your efforts at recycling engine oil wouldn't go down so well today. However, if it wasn't for oil and coal bugging up the planet, nobody would have given renewables any hope, it would have remained a sort of hobby, something for kids to play with or to make ants run around with a little solar panels on their backs. Not where this industry is now. So at one level, thank you very much oil and coal. I'm not sorry that you are leaving us, and we are taking over.....!!!

I will continue my efforts to make sure the energy revolution is a solar one and bring about positive changes in the industry. People keep asking why I don't retire?? Well, there are a few very good reasons. Firstly if I had, I wouldn't be here and would have missed this great event. And above all, there are so many exciting innovations to be innovated and I look forward to everything we can accomplish together in the years ahead.

Thank you for coming to my party.

**George Goudsmit**  
Managing Director, AES Solar



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