

OpenLearn course

Mrs Edwards Interview

Elouise Edwards:

I didn't even know that I'd be nominated, you know? And the morning that I received a letter from the palace, I thought it had been a mistake until when I saw my name and everything else. When I opened it, I was so shocked. I sat on the stairs for a long time. And Beresford came down to go to work. And he said, why you sitting on the stairs? And I said, have a look at this letter. And he looked at it.

I don't think he was very happy because he was very anti-establishment. But I reread the letter after he'd read it. And I thought, I've got to give myself some time to think about this, because if he's not happy about it, then I don't know whether I should receive it.

I went to work. Then I discussed it with my management committee. And they said to me, Elouise, they said, this award is not only for you, it's for all the people who you've been engaged with, engaged in all kinds of different things. They would want to know that through you, they are being recognized for the work that you all have done. We think that you should accept it. So, after a while, I came to the conclusion. And I wrote back to the palace saying that I'd accept the honour, which I did.

After a while, he gave in. Because I said to him, look, we are in this country over the past how many years? We are not a people that record things that we do. We are not very good at recording our things. And if we are not careful, in the years to come, it will be as if we were here, but we never did anything.

Because when you receive the letter from the palace, it actually tells of some of the things that you've done. And I said, well, our children, our grandchildren, our great grandchildren will know that we did do something in this country. We just didn't come and take. And the best place for something like that to be is in the palace, because they will have means of storing this information, and it'll be there for years to come.