

TEXT OF THE INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS delivered by **DR HUGH BRADY**, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University, President, University College Dublin-National University of Ireland, Dublin, on 21 April, 2005, on the occasion of the conferring of the Degree of Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*

A Sheansailéir, agus a mhuintir na hOllscoile, on **FINBAR COSTELLO**

We honour today a remarkable man, a remarkable rugby man, a remarkable UCD man and a man from a remarkable family, in honouring Finbar Costello. I make reference to the remarkable family at the outset because it is right that we recall at this moment that Finbar's father, Michael J Costello, received an honorary LLD from NUI in 1964.

After Clongowes Wood College in 1958, Finbar Costello became a student at UCD in Earlsfort Terrace, where he studied for his BComm. degree. One of his first acts was to join the UCD Rugby Club and has been a continuous member since that time.

In 1960/61 the Rugby Club celebrated its Golden Jubilee with GP Sarsfield Hogan as Club President and Finbar Costello was elected Honorary Secretary – a capacity in which he revealed his considerable organisational talents. The Club regularly fielded eight teams per week and most matches were played on the two split-level pitches in Belfield, parallel to, now, Stillorgan Dual Carriageway. Toggling out for matches was confined to the sparse sheds behind Belfield House, in which the customary post-match tea and Marietta biscuits were served to all players!

It was a good season for the Rugby Club since the first XV lost, controversially, in a replayed final of the Leinster Senior Cup to Blackrock. There was some compensation with the Freshmen XV winning the O'Connell Cup. All told, that season UCD contested three of a possible six Leinster Branch finals and were considered by many to be one of the top Rugby Club in the province.

The following season (1961/62) and in an unusual move in those days, Finbar Costello was re-elected Honorary Secretary of the Rugby Club. This re-election was a tribute to what he had already achieved. For the second season in a row UCD contested three of a possible six Leinster Branch finals – winning the Junior League. The administrative and playing foundations prepared by Finbar, enabled UCD, in the following season (1962/63), to become the first Leinster Club to win the Senior, Junior and Minor cups in the same season.

Finbar graduated with a BComm in 1961 but since then he has continuously maintained involvement with the Rugby Club here in UCD. Indeed, to most persons who know about UCD RFC, he 'is' the Rugby Club and is the embodiment of its character and ethos. He is the one person that has and always will be consulted when any delicate or important matters arise and which need wise counsel.

He has occupied virtually every administrative position in the Rugby Club and this culminated in his year of Presidency during 1980/81. Over the past 50 years or so, he has been, to name but a few:

- A member of the Executive Committee including its Chairman for 3 years – 1999/00, 2000/01 and 2001/02
- A selector including Chairman of the senior selectors
- A member and Chairman of the Club's Finance and Sponsorship Committee and has generated enormous sponsorship for both tours and normal events



- A member of the Rugby Committee
- Coach and team manager (various teams)
- UCD RFC's representative to the Leinster Branch, IRFU for 3 years – 1983/84, 1984/85 and 1985/86
- The Rugby Club's representative to the Athletic Union Committee (AUC).
- He is currently a trustee of the Rugby Club.

His Rugby involvement also extends to the Irish Universities in general and he has been an influential member of the Irish Universities Rugby Union (IUFU) for a number of years. When the Irish Universities toured Japan in 1997, he was a major fundraiser and the sponsorship that he raised ensured that the tour was a viable proposition.

He has also been involved with UCD sport generally, having been both a member and Chairman of UCD's Sports Trust, which has provided significant funding for sport at UCD, particularly through its establishment and development of the UCD Sports Scholars Programme, pioneered by Finbar and the late Dr Tony O'Neill.

He was also Chairman of the Irish Olympic Review Committee after the Melbourne Olympics.

Because of his outstanding sporting prowess, it is easy to forget that Finbar had a long and distinguished career in advertising and marketing. Although formerly marketing director with Irish Glass Bottlers, Finbar is better known as the MD and guiding light of Irish International Advertising Agency - one of the foremost agencies in Ireland over the past 40 years.

Finbar joined what was then Royds Advertising in the 1960s and it is said that when he took over the reigns of MD from Corwyn MacKyle, MacKyle wished him well as said 'I hope when your time comes you are surrounded by as nice a bunch of people as I am.'

Royds was taken over by Extel but the Irish team, (of John Conway, Bill Felton, and Billy Nolan) led by Finbar, proposed and delivered an MBO that was to see the establishment of Irish International.

Over the next three decades Irish International was to produce some of the most effective and influential ads for Irish companies – both here and internationally including the first live-action animation ad featuring the 50-50 cash back bears samba-dancing with model Patricia Devine!

Finbar has faced other challenges in life and when stricken with serious illness in recent years, the courage and fortitude which he showed and his unflinching devotion to his family and to UCD Sport through it all were and continue to be an example to us all.

In honouring Finbar, we join in honouring Jo, his steadfast companion and support for so many years.

Praehonorabilis Cancellarie, totaque universitas.

Presento vobis hunc meum filium, quem scio tam moribus quam doctrina habilem et idoneum esse qui admittatur, honoris causa, ad gradum Doctoratus in Utroque Jure, tam Civili quam Canonico, idque tibi fide mea testor ac spondeo, totique Academiae.