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Millionaire with a heart of gold

THE multi-millionaire, JP McManus, who some speculate could even be worth over a billion, has never forgotten the less well off in society.

Last year alone, his golf classic at Limerick Golf Club raised £15m for local charities.

It is expected that the allocations to local charities will be formalised within the next few days.

"Although we haven't finally completed the figures yet, it looks to be around £15m which is significantly up on other years," said John Harty of the committee.

The first Pro-Am in 1990 raised close to £1m and £3m was the total in 1995.

In recognition of his place as one of Limerick's most famous sons, JP McManus will follow in the footsteps of former US president, Bill Clinton, when he will be accorded the Freedom of Limerick at a special meeting of Limerick Corporation in City Hall on March 16.

A huge sports fan and horse owner, JP now spends his time between his homes in Geneva and Martinstown Stud in Kilmallock.

He has supported a wide range of Limerick charities and worthy causes over the years ranging from educational scholarships through CBS Sexton Street, to fundraising for hospitals and health care institutions while his golf classics have been huge successes.

He donated £50m towards a new national

CLIODHNA MCGOWAN looks at the life of JP McManus who is of Limerick's best loved sons.

sports stadium, the largest figure donated by anyone to the State.

He is perhaps now at his most popular ever in Limerick and his large string of horses, including hurdle champion Istabraq, have established him as a folk hero with the racing public.

Once known as the Sundance Kid, he used to describe himself as a gambler, but nowadays his business portfolio has been launched into high finance, international stock exchanges and leisure ventures.

And though he jets around the world and mixes with some of the best-known and richest people, he has never forgotten his roots.

Said Mayor John Ryan of both Mr Whelan and McManus, "While they have made their mark in very different fields, they have one common characteristic in that they have achieved international recognition while never losing touch with their roots".

JP, like Tiger Woods and Mark O'Meara, is a member of the Isleworth Golf Club in Florida. It's Tiger's home club and owned by JP's close friend, Joe Lewis.

And JP is involved, with Dermot Desmond and others, in the

ownership of the Sandy Lane Hotel in Barbados.

He is known for his generosity and finds himself constantly on the receiving end of begging letters from the public.

His wife, Noreen, is also noted for her charitable work and has done wonders for charities such as Cura, to name just one.

Milford Hospice and other worthy causes will benefit from the money raised in July's Pro-Am. But the McManus contributions are ongoing, such as the CBS scholarships which he instituted as a gesture of gratitude to his old school on Sexton Street.

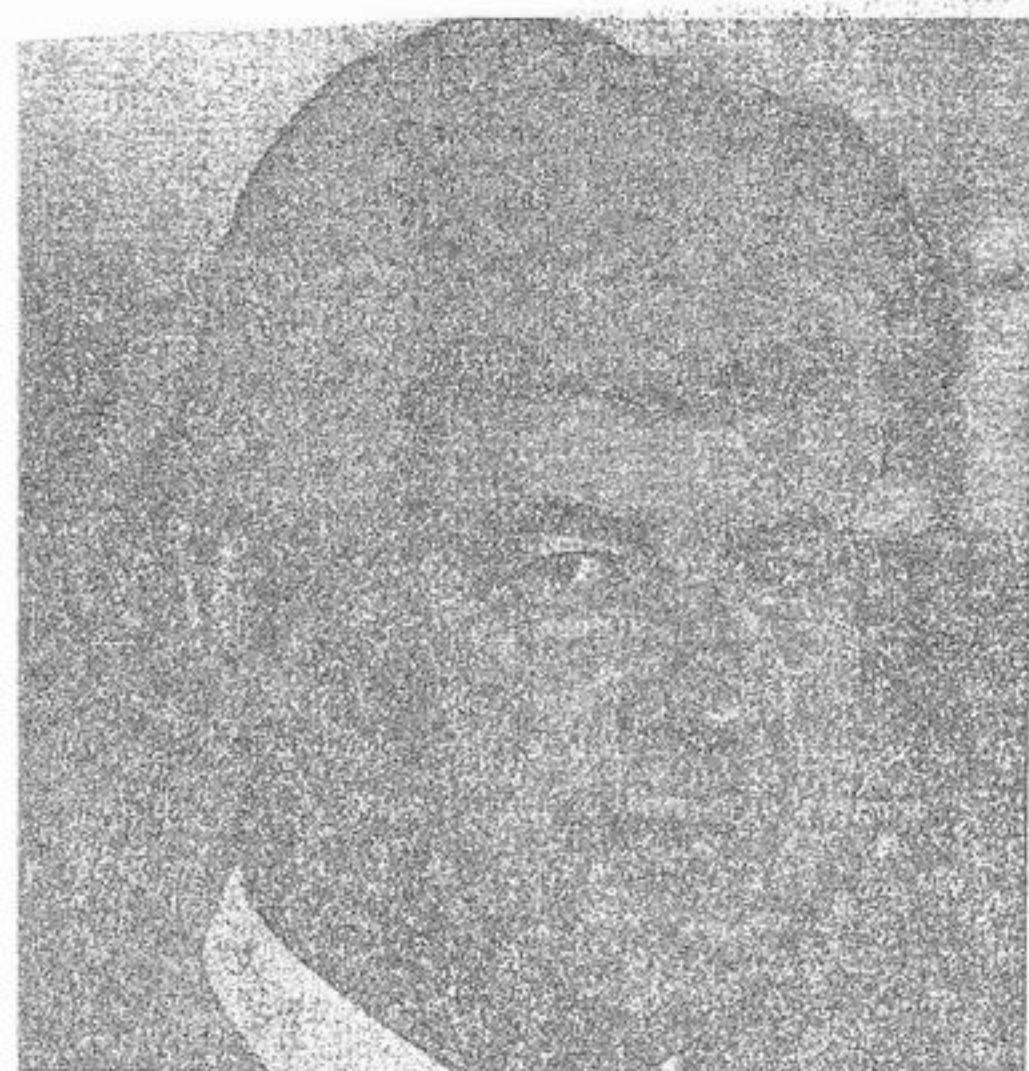
The former CBS boy got into backing horses in his school days and at 17 he joined his father, Johnny, who ran an earth-moving business.

Three years later he joined the ranks of the bookmaking fraternity at Limerick greyhound track and he also had pitches at point-to-points around the country.

The first horse to carry his famous South Liberties colours was Cill Dara, which he bought in 1976. Trained by Con Collins, she won the Irish Cesarewitch in 1977 for him.

As an owner he has dedicated himself to national hunt, a sport which has held a lifelong fascination for him.

JP with his wife, Noreen, bought the magnificent Martinstown Stud on 400-plus acres in 1982 and it is home for the couple and their children, John, Sue Ann and Kieran.



McManus: has raised millions for local charities (LL)