



Alphie McCourt, with Ellen in the background, reads from his new collection of work in Leamy's.

Pictures: Michael Cowhey

Frank's personal items donated

Anne Sheridan

PERSONAL belongings of the late author Frank McCourt will be brought to Limerick and exhibited in the museum in his honour, his widow Ellen has announced.

Speaking in the Frank McCourt museum on Hartstonge Street in the city, where Frank's brother Alphie was launching a collection of work, Ellen McCourt said she plans to add to the museum, which continues to attract tourists from around the world.

"Angela's Ashes is the gift that keeps on giving," she told the audience.

She handed over the graduation robes Frank wore when he received an honorary doctorate of letters from the University of Limerick in 1997 to the museum curator Una Heaton.

She plans to donate Frank's manuscripts, some of his "many, many awards", and private photographs of him and his family to the museum, which is located in his former school Leamy's. One set of items, which she



The audience is enthralled as Alphie McCourt reads from his new work *Heartscald*, a collection of poetry, prose and songs, while Fianna Fail deputy Willie O'Dea is top of the class

believes people will be surprised by, is that Frank was a collector of rosary beads. He had a collection of 30 or 40 beads and they too will be added to the memorabilia of the Pulitzer Prize winning author.

"It was May 2010 when we were last here and the museum really is up and running. Now going forward we'll be able to make it an even bigger success. I'm planning on helping her to do that. It's exciting. I would like to see more actual Frank McCourt memorabilia here and I think it's appropriate that it's here, and that it's at the Leamy school

building," she told the Limerick Chronicle.

Asked how it feels to return to Limerick, for a second occasion since the death of Frank in July 2009, she said: "Like they say in the mafia, once you're in you can never leave. It's actually lovely to be back."

Ellen, Alphie and his wife Lynn, also travelled to Derby last week for the first production of *Angela's Ashes*: the musical. "I was really stunned by it. It was a semi-professional production in a very beautiful theatre. It was a labour of love for this young man Adam How-

ell, who did both the music and the lyrics, and a very enthusiastic cast of 22, with 24 songs written for it. It would be a real shame were it not to have a life after Derby," she said.

She hopes to bring it to Limerick as part of *The Gathering* in 2013 and is in talks with a number of people about the possibility of doing this. Adam dreamed of staging a musical version of *Angela's Ashes* on stage since he read the book 11 years ago.

"It is a really human story about how the human spirit can survive and overcome adversity," he said.

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