

How Tony took his chance and succeeded ...

By **PATRICIA FEEHILY**

A FORMERLY unemployed Limerickman, who took a second chance at education, is among those featured in a new book "A Degree at Last", published by Aontas and launched at Limerick RTC.

Tony O'Mahony saw the chance while on a vocational training opportunity scheme run by Limerick City VEC.

Tony was interested in computers and after the VTOS course, he was offered the chance to attend Limerick RTC as a full time mature student.

"I saw it as a totally new challenge," he said. He took it on and achieved a National Diploma in Software Engineering. He now works as a computer technician in the college.

His attitude towards education for the unemployed changed completely as a result of his very positive experience.

He went, he said at the launch, from "being a cynic to a convert".

"Having a proper qualification does not guarantee a job, but not having one makes it very difficult to secure full time worthwhile employment," he said

Approximately 6,500 mature students enter college each year. About 5% of all full time students and 48% of all part time students are adults.

These figures, according to Aontas, are likely to increase dramatically over the next few years.

"A Degree at Last" is full of human interest, and features stories of choice,

challenge and change to celebrate the year of life-long learning.

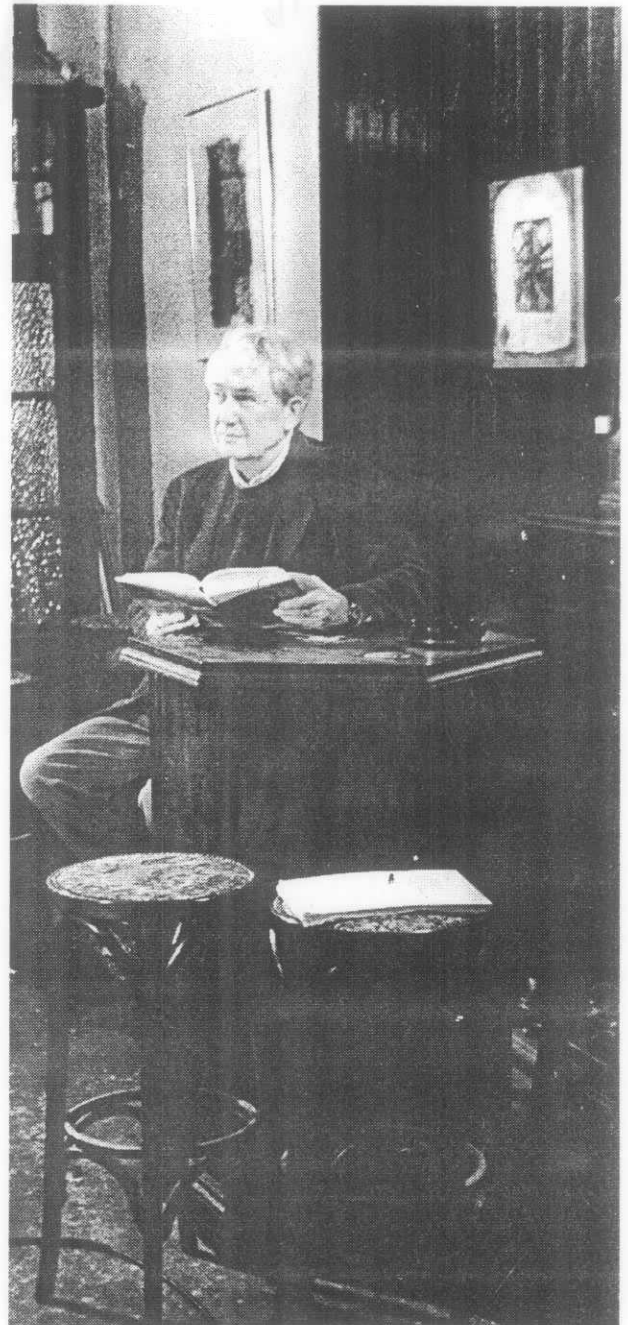
The launch of the book was hosted by Limerick RTC and supported by the AIB Bank.

Among the speakers were James P McDonagh, director of the RTC, Margaret Martin, deputy director of Aontas and co-editor of "A Degree at last", John McCarthy, director of the National centre for guidance in Education and John Ryan lecturer at the RTC and honorary secretary of Aontas.

Councillor bereaved

CITY Council adjourned for 15 minutes, last evening, as a mark of respect to Cllr Frank Prendergast, on the death of his sister Helen Orr.

Mayor Kieran O'Hanlon who proposed the vote of sympathy described the Prendergast family as a very highly respected and close Limerick family and said the death of their sister would be a very sad loss.



A portrait of the artist - author Frank McCourt at the white house. OWEN SOUTH

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