

LIMERICK LEADER

Monday, July 20, 2009 www.limerickleader.ie

BECAUSE LIFE IS LOCAL

RRP€1



BRING ON THE DUBS

Hurlers to face Daly's men in All-Ireland quarter final **SEE SPORT >**

ASHES APPEAL TO MCCOURT FAMILY

■ Mayor: 'Limerick is very proud of, and will never forget, Frank McCourt'

By ANNE SHERIDAN and PETULA MARTYN

THE Mayor of Limerick would like the McCourt family to consider scattering some of the Pulitzer Prize-winning author's ashes over the River Shannon in the city that he captured so vividly in his memoir *Angela's Ashes*.

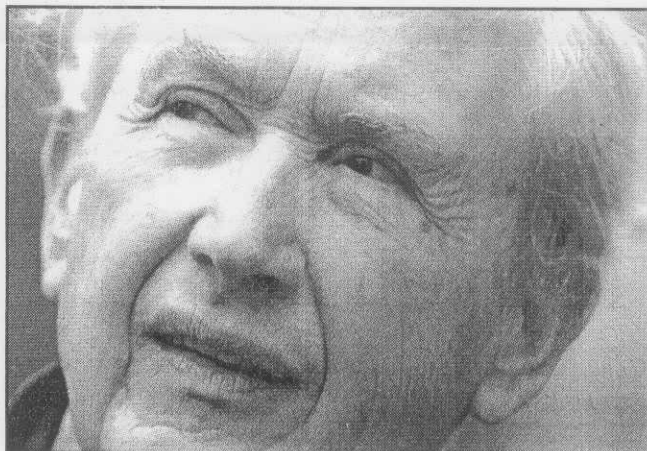
Tributes have been paid to the 78-year-old writer who lost his battle with cancer at a hospice in New York late last night.

The McCourt family are meeting today to discuss the final arrangements for the writer's funeral which is expected to take place in New York, followed by the burial of his ashes in Connecticut near the home he shared with his wife Ellen.

Mayor Kevin Kiely has confirmed that he will represent the people of Limerick at the funeral. In an interview with the Limerick Leader in November 2007, Mr McCourt's thoughts turned to mortality and he said he did not want funeral services or memorials when he died. "Let them scatter my ashes over the Shannon and pollute the river," he laughed.

Mayor Kiely said he was deeply saddened to learn of the death of one of Limerick's most successful and talented sons. The Mayor said that a book of condolences will be opened shortly at City Hall.

"Frank's book, *Angela's Ashes*, and the subsequent movie thrust Limerick into the world spotlight. His compelling memoir brought a tourism boost to our city and



Author Frank McCourt, who died in New York last night

he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University

of Limerick, an institution he had always hoped would exist

in his home town," the Mayor said. He extended his sympathies to Mr McCourt's wife Ellen, daughter Maggie, brothers Malachy and Alphie and his extended family.

"Limerick is very proud of, and will never forget, Frank McCourt."

Mayor of New York, Michael Bloomberg said: "Of all the great New York writers, few have captured the hearts of readers and the heart of the city as well as Frank McCourt."

The Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism has expressed his sympathy on hearing of the author's death. "As a teacher in New York he instilled and encouraged a love of literature and creative writing in his students and as a writer himself, he was a master storyteller," Minister

Martin Cullen said. "He will be best remembered for his powerful memoir *'Angela's Ashes'*, a compelling and inspirational book where he vividly depicted his childhood."

Director of the Arts Council, Mary Cloake, today said that Mr Court's "lyrical and crackling prose" had exerted a significant influence on the memoir genre, and she described *'Angela's Ashes'* as a stunning, affecting piece of literature.

"Though his first book was published relatively late in his life, Frank McCourt has made a unique contribution to Irish literature and its popularisation, both in Ireland and internationally."

See pages 12 and 13 for more on the life and times of the late Frank McCourt

Spend by investors on Opera Centre has reached €106m

By ANNE SHERIDAN

DEVELOPERS behind the Opera Centre shopping centre in Limerick – the largest ever in the Mid-West if it gets planning approval in the next month – have invested at least €106m to date on the unbuilt project.

The latest accounts filed to the Companies Registration Office show that Regeneration Developments Ltd have investments and stocks amounting to €106,305,419, not including other costs.

However, their auditors, BDO Simpson Xavier, warn that "economic developments, in particular the downturn in the property market, creates an uncertainty about the appropriateness of the carrying value of the investments and stock."

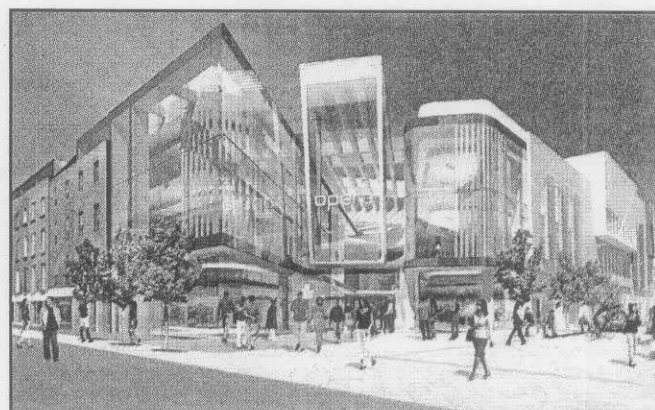
The price of property acquisitions for the site rose from €2.1m in 2006 to €86.6m in 2007. Just over €81m of this was acquired from bank loans, with shareholders loans comprising a further €25.5m.

After taxation, the company had a profit of €34,155 for the year ending December 31, 2007.

By the end of that year, the company repaid close to €3m to former directors Suneil Sharma and Samuel Morrison, who resigned in February that year.

Seven directors resigned from the company within the space of six months, with six directors – David Courtney, Jerry O'Reilly, Terry Sweeney, Peter Butler, Brendan Farrell and Gerard Davis – remaining on board.

This May it emerged that Anglo Irish Bank has a 50 per



The Opera Centre plans which are awaiting approval

cent share in the development, but a spokesperson for the company said Anglo's share in the project is "irrelevant" as to whether it goes ahead.

Mr Courtney, Mr O'Reilly and Mr Sweeney, who are the only directors with a beneficial interest in the shares of the company, are also believed to be clients of Anglo Irish

Bank. The revised plans for the Opera Centre, which have a reputed overall cost of €350m, are currently with An Bord Pleanála.

A second decision date had been set for June 8, however no decision was made at that time and a spokesperson for the national planning authority could only confirm that the plans "are at board level."

In June, the board requested that the developers clarify the plans to the public following a new set of changes to the design.

At that time, Limerick City Council – who granted the development planning permission on two occasions – said they would once again plan to write to An Bord Pleanála stressing the need for this development to go ahead.

City manager Tom Mackey said they fully support the

need for the massive, 40-unit "shopping mecca" in the city, to rival those in the suburbs.

A decision on the expansion of the Crescent Shopping Centre is also with An Bord Pleanála. Both proposed retail centres are vying to offer Marks & Spencer an anchor store in the proposed new centres.

The British chain said the location of their first store in Limerick will depend on which, if any, application receives permission from the board, and which centre can offer M&S the largest unit.

ISSN 1649-8976

