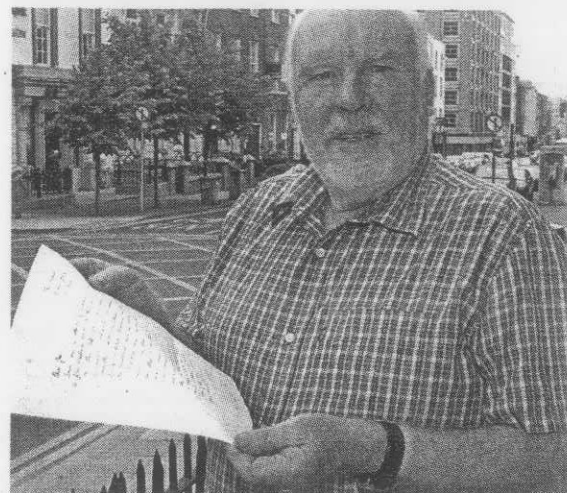


# Frank McCourt (1930-2009)



Joe Kemmy with the letter he received from McCourt

## McCourt sent \$2,500 cheque to help fund Kemmy book

Anne Sheridan

IT puzzled Frank McCourt that a statue of the actor Richard Harris was due to be erected in Limerick, while the city had never honoured Jim Kemmy, the legendary politician, in a similar way.

A letter, which was just come to light, reveals the huge admiration the Angela's Ashes author felt for Mr Kemmy.

In June 2003, six years after the death of Jim Kemmy, a letter was sent by McCourt in New York to the politician's brother, Joe, in Rosbrien.

It begins: "Dear Joe, Show me a stretch of Limerick where Jim walked and I'll kiss it. But then, I'd have to kiss every inch of Limerick, wouldn't I? He walked everywhere and was blessed."

It continues: "They were talking recently about raising a statue of Richard Harris in Limerick and I wondered if they were taking leave of their senses. It was as if they'd never heard of Jim Kemmy."

Joe Kemmy also

the great friendship the Pulitzer Prize winner shared with his brother.

"I'll definitely keep it within the family. It's probably time to frame it now."

Mr Kemmy said he was "very much taken with the idea that McCourt liked Jim and liked what he stood for."

"They were similar in many ways. There was only four or five years between them and Jim lived on O'Curry Street, 50 yards from McCourt."

"Both of them were very perceptive in their youths, whereas many others weren't. Both of them were very much touched by their life around them as they were growing up. Both Jim and McCourt loved books and literature and felt that education was the key to get out of the poverty trap."

"While Jim went on to become a socialist, McCourt wrote lyrically about Limerick and the poverty and questioned why the majority of people had to live like this, and what's why, I guess, they became friends."

Donal O'Regan

JUST weeks before Frank McCourt passed away he was planning to go on a charity trip to a poverty stricken country.

In 2005, Mr McCourt went to Haiti – one of the world's poorest countries – for a week with Concern. The charity was founded by two Limerick brothers, Frs Jack and Aengus Finucane and it was the friendship between Fr Aengus and Mr McCourt that brought the author to Haiti. Another Limerick person, Siobhan Walsh, accompanied him.

"He was quite extraordinary on the trip because it wasn't an easy trip. He spent a lot of time travelling for hours in a car to get to the programme locations, villages and even a remote island," said Ms Walsh, executive director of Concern Worldwide US.

Following that experi-

ence, Concern was never far from Mr McCourt's mind and he was planning another charity mission shortly before he died.

"I met him just a few weeks ago at a fundraising event in the Irish Repertory Theatre in New York. He had a big smile on his face and said he wanted to go on another one. He said, 'Siobhan I haven't given up on going someplace else with you and this time I'll bring Ellen'. He said he wanted to get his wife involved as well. He said he hadn't given up on that [another charity trip] yet," said Ms Walsh.

Ms Walsh said from Mr McCourt's teaching career he loved meeting the kids and spending time with them in Haiti.

"You can see from the photographs – what was his passion? His passion was being with the children and talking to the children. He wanted to see

the kind of schools they were in and what it was like for a young child in Haiti growing up and going to school," said Ms Walsh.

After being to Haiti, Mr McCourt contacted many supporters of Concern about his time there.

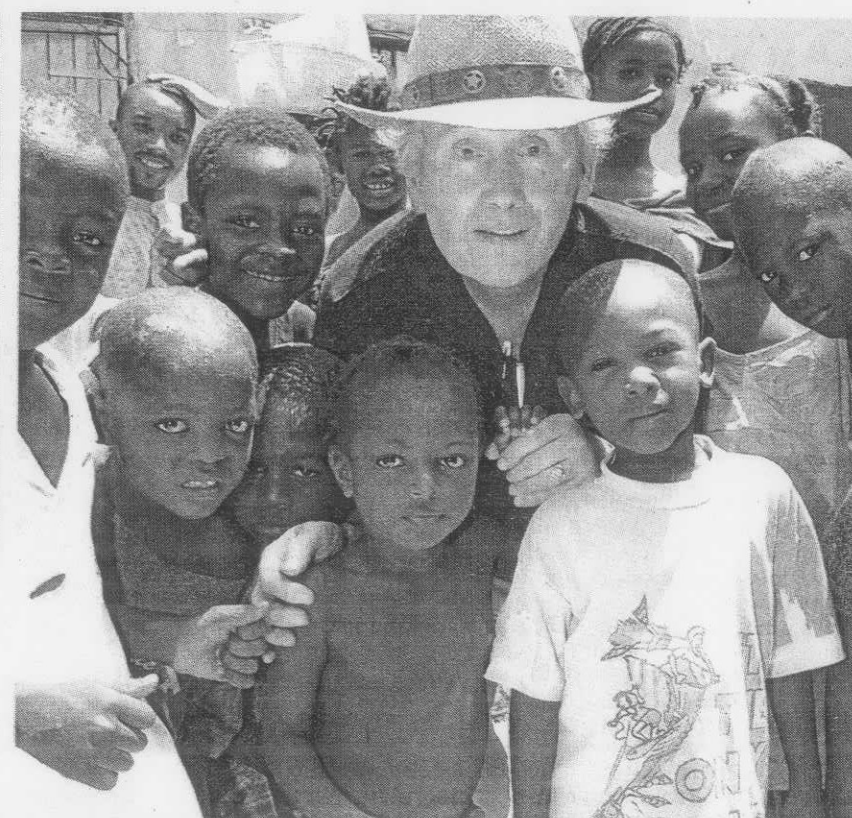
"He talked about the importance of good education. He explained what it was like to be a school teacher in Haiti where you often don't have chalk or a blackboard. Many of the children would be hungry and have carried water for two or three hours before school. He was a big advocate for investing in education. He wrote to our donors and said every child on this earth should have the right to school," said Ms Walsh.

"He didn't forget poverty. He wasn't talking the talk, he walked the walk when he went to Haiti. He was a wonderful man, very down to earth."

## Charitable Frank showed great concern for educating the poor

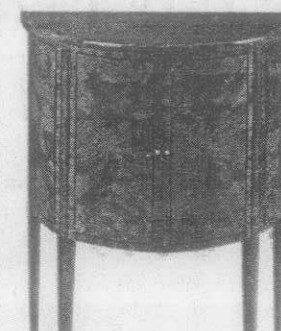
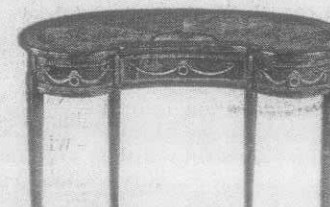
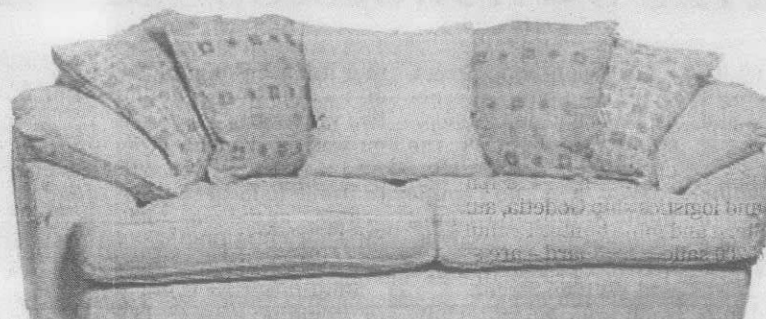
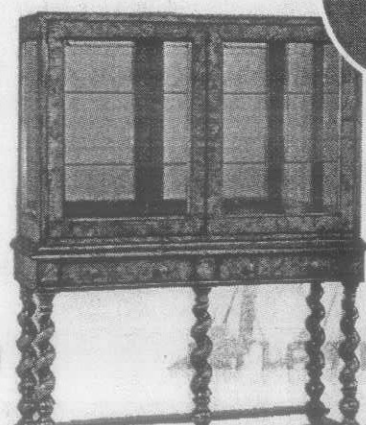


Above: Frank McCourt befriended eight year old Jacelyne Adrien on a visit to her school Londlay Laveture, at Seau D'eau, Haiti



Right: Frank loved meeting the children and finding out about their situation, especially their education

# Conroy's





talking recently about raising a statue of Richard Harris in Limerick and I wondered if they were taking leave of their senses. It was as if they'd never heard of Jim Kemmy."

Joe Kemmy also received a cheque for \$2,500 from Frank McCourt for the purposes of a book on Jim Kemmy's contributions to political life.

While a book is being written about Kemmy, the intended author at the time McCourt authorised the cheque failed to follow up on the book.

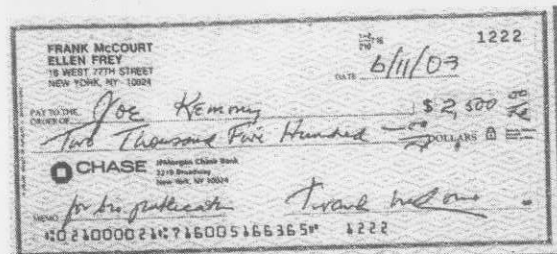
Now, the cheque from JP Morgan Chase, Broadway, New York, remains uncashed and Mr Kemmy intends to keep it within the family as a memento of

become a socialist, McCourt wrote lyrically about Limerick and the poverty and questioned why the majority of people had to live like this, and what's why, I guess, they became friends."

Mr Kemmy was invited to attend the ceremony at the University of Limerick in 1997 when McCourt received an honorary doctorate of letters.

He recalled that he then saw a different side of Frank McCourt.

"I was sitting next to a man at dinner who asked me how I knew McCourt. I told him that Frank was a good friend of my brother's and returned the question. He said: 'I was best man at his three weddings'."



The cheque sent by McCourt for the book

## Literary journal honours author

Anne Sheridan

THE late Frank McCourt will be honoured at a gala ceremony in New York this Friday evening, where a university has dedicated its current literary journal entirely to the Angela's Ashes author.

The Southampton Review, the literary magazine published by one of Stony Brook University's creative writing programmes, has commemorated the author who was associated with its programme for many years.

It will be "an evening of readings, reminiscences, literature, tears, and laughter" in recognition of McCourt, who passed away last Sunday following a battle with meningitis and skin cancer.

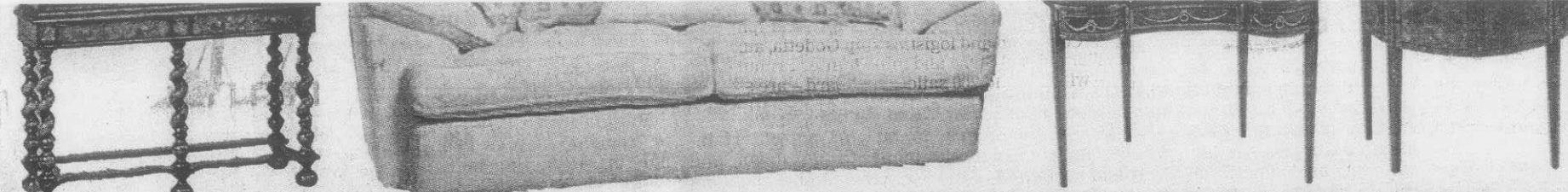
The journal also makes numerous references to the Limerick Leader, specifically in relation to the 'Leader Interview' with Frank McCourt in November 2007, when he spoke about his feelings on his own mortality.

Robert Reeves, founder and director, said McCourt was their "rock star" - even amid a field of huge literary talent who contributed to the writing programme.

"On a faculty with Nobel Laureates, Poet Laureates, winners of Pulitzers, Emmys and Oscars, only Frank's readings fill football stadiums," said Mr Reeves.

"With this issue of The Southampton Review, we hope to set a new standard for the 'Mention McCourt' tradition. No one's quite sure how this came about, but at every public gathering, lecture, reading and theatre event, we always shoehorn in a reference to Frank. Even our editor-in-chief Lou Ann Walker has put together an extraordinary journal that relentlessly mentions McCourt no less than 300 times," said Mr Reeves.

In the journal, W.S. Merwin has written an essay entitled 'Listening to Frank', while Clark Blaise has penned 'Smudges on the Photographs: The Memoirs of Frank McCourt'. There is a Frank McCourt quiz, 'Everything You Think You Know about Frank' by Christian McLean, a litany of quotes, 'The Wit and Wisdom of Frank McCourt', and a cartoon of McCourt by Jules Feiffer.



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# Frank McCourt (1930-2009)

## Death denies McCourt the chance to end 'unfinished emotional business' with city

Anne Sheridan

FRANK McCourt used to receive a birthday card every year from former US president Bill Clinton, as they shared the same birthday, August 19.

But the birthday present McCourt had always been searching for was a reconciliation with his childhood home, Limerick.

"I've had such a turbulent relationship with the city. The city doesn't know it," he told the Limerick Leader last year.

"It's what I had to write about when I finally started writing after teaching for 30 years. I had to get it out of my system, but you never do. People say it's a catharsis, but it's not. Look at me - I'm back here again."

When McCourt died last Sunday aged 78 that peace with Limerick seemed to elude him until the day he died.

Younger brother Malachy told the Leader last week that even on his death bed Frank had been speaking of his "unfinished emotional business with Limerick".

Speaking in Limerick last year, McCourt also

revealed that there was another book yet to be written about the city, and how his life had changed since the publication of Angela's Ashes in 1996.

At the age of 66, McCourt had suddenly been launched into the literary stratosphere, and claimed a Pulitzer Prize a year later, as well the National Book Critics Circle Award, the Los Angeles Times Book Award, and received an honorary doctorate from the University of Limerick.

The book had also spent 117 weeks on The New York Times best-seller list. Millions of people across the globe have been affected by the book, but its unexpected success also added another layer of complexes to McCourt's relationship with Limerick.

It has sold in excess of six million copies and has been translated into 32 languages, but sales figures for 'Tis and Teacher Man are also likely to be in the high six figures.

After the publication of his first children's book, Angela and the Baby Jesus, in November 2007, he began working on a novel about New York and



Limerick author Frank McCourt, who has died in New York at the age of 78, sips a pint of Guinness during a visit to the White House Bar, Glentworth Street. PICTURE: ADRIAN BUTLER

was also said to be rewriting his play, The Irish and How They Got That Way.

After those two projects, he said he hoped to write a book about his life after the publication of Angela's Ashes.

"Some day I'll have to write the real book and then watch out," he laughed.

Also in the pipeline is the film of Teacher Man, the screenplay of which has been written by the Oscar-winning Ronald Bass of Rain Man fame. Johnny Depp, Matthew Broderick and Cillian Murphy have all been mentioned to star as McCourt, depicting his years as a teacher at Stuyvestant High School, where he taught the actress Lucy Liu. It has been said that the school has been made so popular by the book that it is now "harder to get into than securing a place in Harvard." He retired from the school in 1987 and within nine years his account of a miserable Catholic childhood in Limerick was known worldwide.

Frank McCourt is survived by his wife, Ellen, and daughter, Maggie.

## An old romantic at odds with his Irish Catholic upbringing

Anne Sheridan

FOR all the misery of his childhood, Frank McCourt was a true romantic at heart. But his nature was at odds with his Catholic upbringing where "girls were sins".

"We had nothing to do with them. I met some in my late teens, but it was too late then. I was on my way to America. You'd go to dances but you were afraid to do anything because you might sin."

He married his first wife in August 1961, his second wife in August 1984, and his third in August 1994.

"I have to be wary when August comes," he once joked.

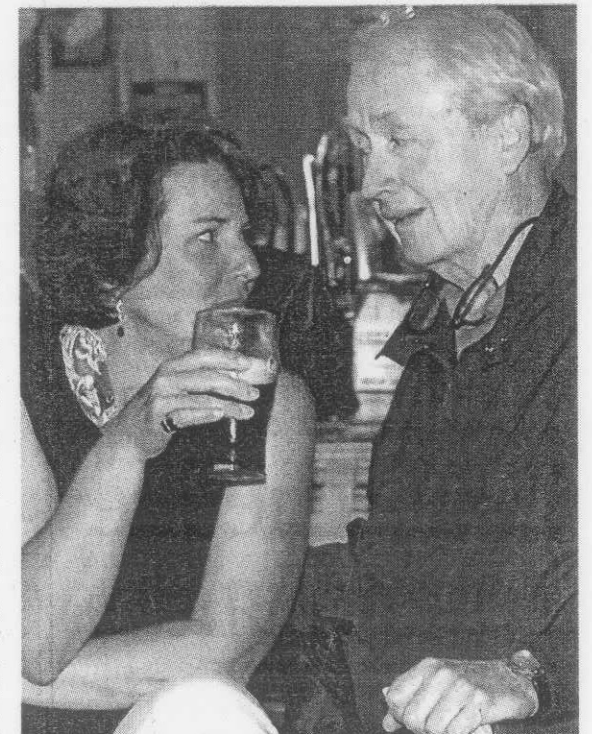
However, Frank found lasting love with Ellen Frey, a senior vice-president at a public relations company in New York, who was 24 years his junior, and became his third wife.

They met in 1989 in the Lion's Head bar in Greenwich Village, a literary hangout where Frank would regularly entertain the crowd.

It was a cold, December evening when he swept into the bar wearing a long Irish wool coat and an Afghan hat. Ellen was sitting at the bar with a number of friends.

"Are any of my ex-wives here?" he shouted.

According to a report in the New York Times at the time of their marriage, they soon enjoyed spending entire days watching old movies together and



Frank McCourt, with his wife Ellen, share a moment in South's Bar in Limerick, where he tasted his first pint

living on Chinese food.

He eventually moved into her apartment and had a habit of vacuuming only with his cowboy hat on.

"He can't vacuum without the hat," said his new bride.

They enjoyed going to the Riverrun bar in TriBeCa, drinking single-malt whiskies, and watching plays at the Public Theater.

They married on August 13, 1994, outside a friend's country house on the banks of the Delaware River.

With 90 guests or so, the couple took their vows underneath a tree that had white ribbons and bouquets of wildflowers tied to the branches.

Frank's brother, Malachy, said Frank had a very gloomy outlook on life until he met Ellen.

"Now he's a changed man," he said nearly 15 years ago.

"Every one of us has a wellspring of laughter, and all we need is to be drilled or uncorked. That's what she did. She found the cork and released it and he's bubbling," said Malachy.

## South's on tourist map

Catherine Moore

SOUTH'S pub has long been a tourist attraction for fans of Angela's Ashes. It was the pub where Frank had his first pint, and where his alcoholic father, Malachy, drank.

Anne Sheridan

ANGELA'S Ashes author Frank McCourt may have died in New York on Sunday last after contracting meningitis, but Angela's Ashes tour guide Mick

how he and his brother, Malachy, would pour water down the slope of the lane in icy conditions and slide down.

Michael O'Donnell was reputedly terrified when Frank agreed to go on the

iser Anne Marie Victory said: "You can imagine if you loved the book and loved the movie how big this is for people."

"He's a big attraction worldwide; people love to be with him. This was a

On upper Henry Street, with its many internet cafes, he had ample opportunity to witness the changing face of the city.

"We had no traffic lights in those days until they put them up at the

tour has been running for over a decade - beginning two years after the memoir was published in 1996. And it is a tour that will continue to keep running because, as the tour guide Michael O'Donnell, said





Frank McCourt may have died in New York on Sunday last after contracting meningitis, but Angela's Ashes tour guide Mick O'Donnell said that Mr McCourt's most celebrated book "will never die."

Frank last visited Limerick in August 2008 to take part in the tour for the first time, but further visits to the city had been planned.

On that occasion, the rain stayed at bay as the author walked the byways and lanes of his childhood around Barrack Hill.

Memories flooded back, he said, as he recalled

the lane in icy conditions and slide down.

Michael O'Donnell was reputedly terrified when Frank agreed to go on the tour, but it didn't show on the day.

"This is where Frank emptied the piss-pot outside the back door," he told the group of American tourists who had paid for the trip.

His 14 American companions paid \$7,800 for the pleasure of his company over the 10-day tour, after it attracted major attention when advertised in the New York Times and Wall Street Journal.

New York tour organ-

ized the tour and loved the movie how big this is for people.

"He's a big attraction worldwide; people love to be with him. This was a once in a lifetime opportunity without a doubt."

Mr McCourt noted that, in a city full of change, all that had remained of his youth was the lamp post in the corner where he used to meet his friends at night.

The Franciscans have gone, the Jesuits have gone and foreign nationals have moved into the city in their tens of thousands, just like McCourt, who fled to America in search of a better life.

Frank McCourt met with controversy throughout his life. Straight talking Frank spoke as he found, and his critics did likewise. Fellow Limerick arts veteran, actor Richard Harris and Frank had a fiery relationship. So fiery in fact that Frank once struck Harris in a New York pub.

Back in 2000, the Limerick Leader reported how Frank and his brother Malachy got into a disagreement with Harris about Limerick.

Harris claimed that Frank was being derogatory about Limerick and in the middle of the heated discussion Frank struck him in the nose and promptly ran out the door of the pub.

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Harris went on to say that Frank and Malachy

had refused to pay the extra charge to bring their mother's coffin back to Ireland and had her cremated instead which would have been against her wishes as a devout Catholic.

Harris alleged: "They decided to cremate their mother and bring her ashes back in their overnight bags."

Harris also alleged that it was a "commonly held opinion amongst the Irish

years back he got a job in a hotel, which had for some reasons a lot of canaries," explained Ger.

Problems arose when the hotel employee who looked after the birds had to go on holiday and Frank was given the job to mind them.

"Of course he forgot all about them and some died."

"Knowing he was in a bit of trouble he went out and got some glue and glued them to the perches. It's a true story, and it's one he told himself" said Ger, laughing.

But the author is likely to remain a presence hanging over the tour, though he admitted to being mystified at the overwhelming attention it has attracted.

"All those here today have read the book and are looking for the deeper meaning and that is why they are here."

"If they find a deeper meaning they will get a prize, as I have never been able to find it," he said.

Frank McCourt and Mick O'Donnell lead tourists around places in the city associated with Angela's Ashes during the author's last visit home in August 2008

Owner Dave Hickey said: "We have had visitors from America and as far as field as China. We even had the editor of the New York Times come and visit." The author himself returned several times after he became famous.

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## The fiery clash with Harris – over mother Angela's ashes

Catherine Moore

FRANK McCourt met with controversy throughout his life. Straight talking Frank spoke as he found, and his critics did likewise. Fellow Limerick arts veteran, actor Richard Harris and Frank had a fiery relationship. So fiery in fact that Frank once struck Harris in a New York pub.

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Harris went on to say that Frank and Malachy



Richard Harris: got into a row with McCourt over the author's portrayal of Limerick

had refused to pay the extra charge to bring their mother's coffin back to Ireland and had her cremated instead which would have been against her wishes as a devout Catholic.

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"Of course he forgot all about them and some died."

"Knowing he was in a bit of trouble he went out and got some glue and glued them to the perches. It's a true story, and it's one he told himself" said Ger, laughing.

## Hotel job that was for the birds

ABBEYFEALE's Ger Lynch who lived in the States for many years recalled this week one of the funnier Frank McCourt stories, told by the author when he was being interviewed on US television.

"It seems that some

years back he got a job in a hotel, which had for some reasons a lot of canaries," explained Ger.

Problems arose when the hotel employee who looked after the birds had to go on holiday and Frank was given the job to mind them.

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## McCourt in his own words

On his relationship with Limerick

"There's something about coming back to Limerick that's very moving - I've had such a turbulent relationship with the city. The city doesn't know it. It's what I had to write about when I finally started writing after teaching for 30 years. I had to get it out of my system, but you never do. People say it's a catharsis, but it's not. Look at me - I'm back here again."

On his impressions of the "new" Limerick

"I wander around in this state of awe over the changes in the place. I delight at the new atmosphere and freedom; it seems like a very youthful city - buoyant, optimistic, bursting with energy. I envy the people who are young and growing up in this city. I would have loved to have grown up in a city like this."

On Angela's Ashes

"I wouldn't have been satisfied if I hadn't written Angela's Ashes - that was the one thing I wanted to do. I would have died howling if I hadn't written it, and asked God for just one more year."

On the controversy

"Of course you embellish and of course, you have fill in the blank spots of conversation. Nobody can argue with me, because these things happened in my family and these things happened in my head. There were things that happened to me which were beyond anyone's understanding or experience, so it's my story. They can argue as much as they

like, but I wouldn't dare intrude on their story."

On life after his first memoir

"My life is like something out of a movie. I wrote Angela's Ashes and boom, my life changed overnight. I have money for the first time in my life."

On happiness

"Like everyone else I think I succumb to misery and emotional gravity from time to time. The world gets me down and certain parts of my life are not completely satisfactory. But I have a lot to be thankful for."

On writing

"There was only one Muhammad Ali in the ring and other people tried to imitate him, but it didn't work. Don't try to write. Just scribble, scribble, scribble. If it demands it, it will be born. It will come."

On death

"I wouldn't like to be incapacitated, or handicapped, or die of a slow disease. I don't want to be beholden to anyone or have anyone wiping my mouth if I'm drooling. I'd just like to go. I don't want funeral services or memorials. Let them scatter my ashes over the Shannon and pollute the river."

On the past

"We've all been damaged by our history, by the things we carried with us, but it wasn't our fault. That's the one thing we have to remember."



A laugh and a pint: Frank McCourt enjoys a pint and a chat in South's Bar with proprietor Dave Hickey



### EMERGENCY PLACE OF SAFETY SERVICE

**WANTED: Foster families to provide care to children and young people at times of crisis.**

**Families should be open to receiving children into their care at very short notice and outside of normal office hours.**

**It is envisaged that the maximum length of stay for children would be up to 72 hours.**

**We are looking for people who can provide a warm, caring environment to children and young people who have experienced trauma.**

**Families will receive remuneration. Families must be willing to commit themselves to fostering in the Emergency Place of Safety Service, through Five Rivers Ireland for at least twelve months.**

**Assessment and training will be provided to all Five Rivers Ireland Foster Families. There will also be access to 24 hour on-call support from Five Rivers Ireland.**

**For more information please contact: Five Rivers Ireland on 01-866 5291 or visit our website [www.fiveriversireland.ie](http://www.fiveriversireland.ie)**



# Frank McCourt (1930-2009)

## At ease with the Teacher Man on dream interview

Anne Sheridan

IT WAS an assignment the editor himself said he'd fight for. As a young reporter, not long out of the halls of the University of Limerick, the prospect of meeting Frank McCourt, was a dream marking.

When news of his untimely death began to spread last week, other reporters told of their own stories of meeting McCourt.

One young American man said he interviewed him as a college student, and even though he was a vegetarian, he joined him in eating a shrimp salad so as not to offend him.

Now, news reports of his death and articles commemorating his life and work have appeared on more than 1,400 websites, from the Hindustan Times to the Baltimore Sun and the Philadelphia Inquirer.

In my own case, it was somewhat ironic that on the occasion – interviewing a Pulitzer Prize winner – I was remarkably free of nerves.

But Frank was someone who would put you at ease; each question posed led to a whole story in itself, evoking even more questions, and yet more tales told in his inimitable style.

It was, without doubt, the easiest and most enjoyable interview I have conducted in my three years at the Limerick Leader.

For any writer, the opportunity to meet McCourt and take up to an hour of his time was a gift from the Gods, a chance to perhaps glean some of his writing talent.

Here, after all, was a teacher of more than 30 years, who inspired thousands of pupils at the now world famous Stuyvesant High School in New York. Yet his natural aptitude



Audience with the author: Limerick Leader reporter Anne Sheridan memorably interviews the late Frank McCourt

as a teacher had not yet left him. His advice to "aspiring and despairing" writers was to find their own style.

"If you don't," he warned, "you're dead."

The thing about McCourt was that he spoke just as beautifully and lyrically as he wrote.

Witness this nugget of advice: "There was only one Muhammad Ali in the ring and other people tried to imitate him, but it didn't work. Don't try to write. Just scribble, scribble, scribble. If it demands it, it will be born. It will come."

Not only that, but McCourt felt a moral obligation to share his wisdom about everything he had learned in his past 78 years, from his years in

**"Ah, yes. You were the girl asking me difficult questions I couldn't answer," Frank McCourt said when we met again, this time on Barrack Hill, less than a year later**

Brooklyn to Limerick and back again.

"If you live past 65 you're responsible to the rest of humanity to pass on your insights, that's why you're allowed to live

a little longer. So if I'm here, there's a reason I'm here," he told this newspaper in November 2007, when he was in the city to launch his first children's book, *Angela and the Baby*

Jesus.

With the publication of *Angela's Ashes*, 'Tis and Teacher Man, people across the world have a sense of familiarity with McCourt – everyone knows his story, and consequently feel they know the man behind the best-selling trio of memoirs.

"Ah, yes. You were the girl asking me difficult questions I couldn't answer," Frank McCourt said when we met again, this time on Barrack Hill, less than a year later.

McCourt's new, amiable relationship with the Limerick Leader marked a departure from his fractious relationship with the paper during the editorship of Brendan Halligan, who retired in 2006.

Back around 1996, when *Angela's Ashes* was published, reams of column inches were devoted to the claims of the naysayers, out to disprove McCourt and discredit his multi-award-winning memoir.

Gerry Hannan and Paddy Malone remain two of his fiercest opponents 13 years on. Once, a picture of him appeared in print as a smiling Limerick boy scout and asked "Is this the picture of misery?"

That first interview I conducted with McCourt, now some 20 months ago, finished on a high.

On that windy November afternoon reporters filed in to the South Court Hotel for their allotted slot with the author.

But I left safe in the knowledge that I emerged with something different, with words that might last a lifetime, that ultimately meant something.

The Southampton Review, a prestigious literary journal in New York, has now recorded that same sliver of information in a special publication devoted entirely to Frank McCourt, due out later this month. Are you afraid to die, I asked? Within a year McCourt would be struck with the skin cancer, melanoma, and while he would ultimately beat cancer, it had weakened his immune system and left him susceptible to meningitis.

"I wouldn't like to be incapacitated, or handicapped, or die of a slow disease," he said. "I don't want to be beholden to anyone or have anyone wiping my mouth if I'm drooling. I'd just like to go."

"I don't want funeral services or memorials. Let them scatter my ashes over the Shannon and pollute the river."

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## University head's tribute to a 'wonderful writer'

THE president of University of Limerick, Prof Don Barry, paid tribute to the late "wonderful writer" Frank McCourt, writes Anne Sheridan

Prof Barry said he was saddened by Frank's death. The writer received an honorary Doctorate of Letters from the university in 1997.

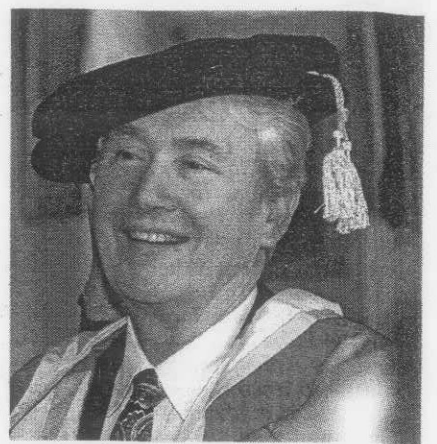
"Frank was a wonderful writer, a great friend to the University of Limerick and a man of great wit, passion and warmth. We shall miss him a great deal, and our thoughts are with Ellen and his family at this sad time," said Prof Barry.

Acting president Prof Paul McCutcheon added that the Pulitzer Prize winner "will be sorely missed by all of us at UL."

"He was an avid supporter of this institution and we appreciated greatly the time he gave to promoting and ensuring our success. He made a significant contribution to English literature and was a cultural treasure of Limerick city," he said.

Mr McCourt was supportive of the work of the UL Foundation, was a director of their board for eight years up until this May, and became a UL Foundation Life Trustee this May.

In 1997 he became a writer-in-residence



Frank McCourt after he received an honorary Doctorate of Letters from UL

under the aegis of the Glucksman Distinguished Visiting Writers Programme, and helped the university to acquire The Leonard Collection, which encompasses literature, history, topography, politics and the social sciences. The collection of over 4,000 items is housed in the UL Glucksman Library in a room named in the memory of Frank's mother, Angela.

## Moving tributes from around the world to a talented Limerick man

"Frank McCourt was a talented Limerick man and he had the courage and ability to rise above the poverty and the social hypocrisy of Catholic Ireland in the 40s and 50, but the situation in Limerick was no different to those in the tenements of Cork and Dublin."

– Dr Edward Walsh, founding president of the University of Limerick

"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."

– New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg

"For a boy coming from such an impoverished background to enjoy such a glowing international literary career and win the Pulitzer Prize is remarkable. Limerick is very proud of, and will never forget, Frank McCourt."

– Mayor of Limerick Kevin Kiely

misfortune at a young age to find his place in the world, and in that process inspired many, many people – students, friends and readers alike"

– Martin Cullen, Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism

"Frank McCourt was an outstanding and talented writer, whose work reached a great number of readers and achieved critical acclaim. Unquestionably, *Angela's Ashes*, his most famous work, is a stunning, affecting piece of literature that made a deep and lasting impact on its readers."

– Mary Cloake, director of the Arts Council

"My heart is broken. Frank was my teacher at Stuyvesant High School in English so long ago. He brought Melville alive in his classroom. He inspired me to write some amazing essays and always made his students feel special. I will mourn his loss along with millions of others."

– Former pupil Faith Reilly, class of 1975 Stuyvesant High School,

in a post on the New York Times website

"Frank McCourt was an author of rare ability whose vivid prose and creative ability captivated millions. However, it is his life, and not just his literary work, that will rightly be celebrated."

– Fine Gael Arts spokesperson Olivia Mitchell

"His Pulitzer Prize winning masterpiece, *Angela's Ashes*, shone a light into the dark recesses of Ireland's past, but it was Frank's ability to overcome such adversity that will continue to inspire thousands all around the world."

– Deputy Dan Neville

"His talents as a writer and modesty as a man will be forever remembered by the people of Limerick. He put Limerick on the map throughout the world in 1996 with *Angela's Ashes*, and tourists still flock to see the many landmarks and streets he so brilliantly depicted."

– Minister for Defence Willie O'Dea