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# Family casts out idea of Frank statue

■ Scholarship for child from deprived area would be more fitting tribute, says brother Malachy as Frank McCourt book sales soar

Anne Sheridan

BOOK sales of Angela's Ashes have dramatically increased in Limerick since the death of its famous author just over a week ago. Frank O'Mahony, of O'Mahony's on O'Connell Street, said they had a phenomenal six months' worth of normal sales in just one week.

"If a famous author dies you would normally see an increase in sales, but six months' worth is something. It was a very dramatic jump, and there was a jump in sales for 'Tis and Teacher Man also," said Mr O'Mahony.

The bookstore has now ordered hundreds of more copies to cope with demand, which they expect will be maintained over the coming months.

Tourist numbers taking part in the Angela's Ashes walking tour of the city have also "moderately increased" in the past week.

However, Mick O'Donnell, the guide who hosts the tour, said figures would be higher were it not for

the global downturn in tourism, and particularly a fall-off in the number of American tourists visiting the Shannon region.

Limerick City Council is now planning to honour the Pulitzer Prize winning author in two ways, but Malachy McCourt has appealed to City Hall not to erect a statue of Frank in the city.

Instead, he said his brother would have preferred that any money spent in his memory be directed towards a scholarship for a pupil from one of Limerick's disadvantaged estates.

Mr McCourt said he got "a fit laughing" when he heard of plans to erect a statue of his younger brother on Bedford Row – the same street where a statue of the actor Richard Harris, whom Frank famously had a fight with in a New York bar.

"It is a meaningless, expensive kind of thing," he said of the proposed statue or bust of his Pulitzer Prize winning brother.

"What he would have



Malachy McCourt: tears and laughter flowed at NY memorial to Frank

wanted would be a scholarship for a poor kid, named after him. It would mean something if you educated someone in the spirit of Frank McCourt. But please, no statues," said Mr McCourt, who added that he discussed the matter with Frank's widow, Ellen.

When questioned if his late brother should posthumously receive the Freedom of the City of Limerick, which has also been suggested by the Mayor of Limerick, Cllr Kevin Kiely,

Mr McCourt jokingly replied: "Perhaps, if it could be extended to the whole family!"

Over 200 people attended what was intended to be a family gathering in memory of Frank McCourt in Rosie O'Grady's bar, 52nd street and 7th Avenue, New York, last week.

Among those in attendance was former President of the United States, Bill Clinton, who shared a friendship with Frank McCourt. Both also celebrated their birthdays on August 19, and would exchange cards each year.

"He asked courteously if he could come and say a few words. He was very sensitive, very respectful and very funny. It was a grand, lovely evening. There were a lot of pictures of Frank passed about. He probably would have said 'God, will ye leave me alone.' There was a lot of laughter and tears," said Mr McCourt.

A public celebration of Frank McCourt will be held on October 6 in Symphony Space, Broadway,

New York, which thousands of people are expected to attend.

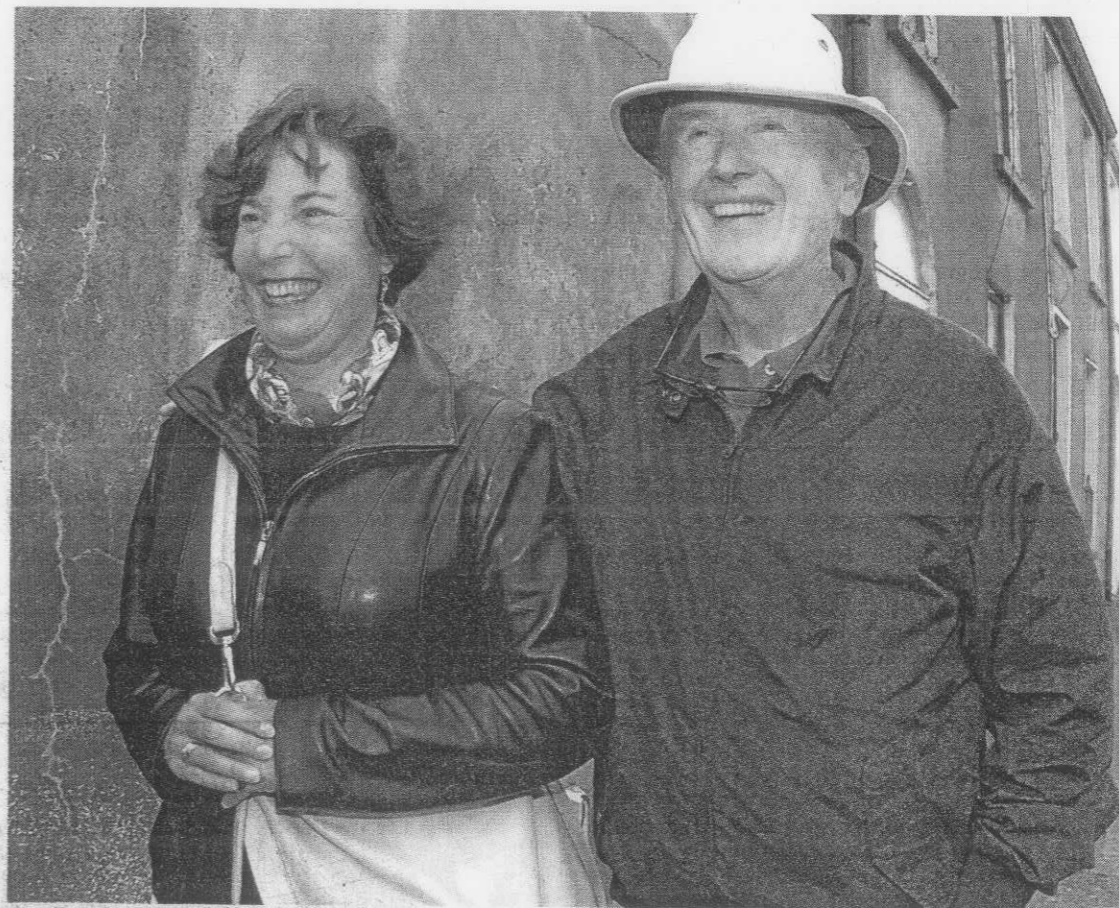
Some of his ashes will be buried near his home in Roxbury, Connecticut, as well as at Leamy's building on Hartstonge Street, the author's national school, possibly in late October or November.

Last Friday, there was a further reception for the late author at Stony Brook Southampton, a division of the State University of New York, where a new literary journal has been dedicated entirely to McCourt.

Several former students, now published writers, spoke of his teaching style, how he inspired them, and what they felt they owed to him. Acclaimed writer Colum McCann also contributed a chapter.

"There are dangers in telling any story about Frank McCourt," he begins. "The likelihood is that someone, especially Frank, will have a better story to tell, because the simple truth is that nobody can tell a story better than the man himself."

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Frank and his wife Ellen on the Angela's Ashes walking tour: Malachy McCourt says he discussed ideas for a memorial with Frank's widow and educating a disadvantaged child in the spirit of Frank is a preferred option



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