

UL president pays tribute to late Frank McCourt

■ Graduates told the author was a friend to UL

By ANNE SHERIDAN

THE President of the University of Limerick, Prof Don Barry, has paid tribute to the late Frank McCourt, who received an honorary doctorate from the university.

Addressing hundreds of humanities graduates, at a graduation ceremony yesterday, Prof Barry said the late Dr McCourt was a long time friend of

the University of Limerick.

"Frank's contribution to UL will live on through generations of graduates who have benefited from his literary expertise and from his generosity. He will be sorely missed," he said.

In 1997 UL conferred an honorary doctorate on Frank McCourt, and in the same year the Angela's Ashes author shared his expertise in literature with students and staff when he became a writer-in-resi-

dence, under the aegis of the Glucksman Distinguished Visiting Writers programme at the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

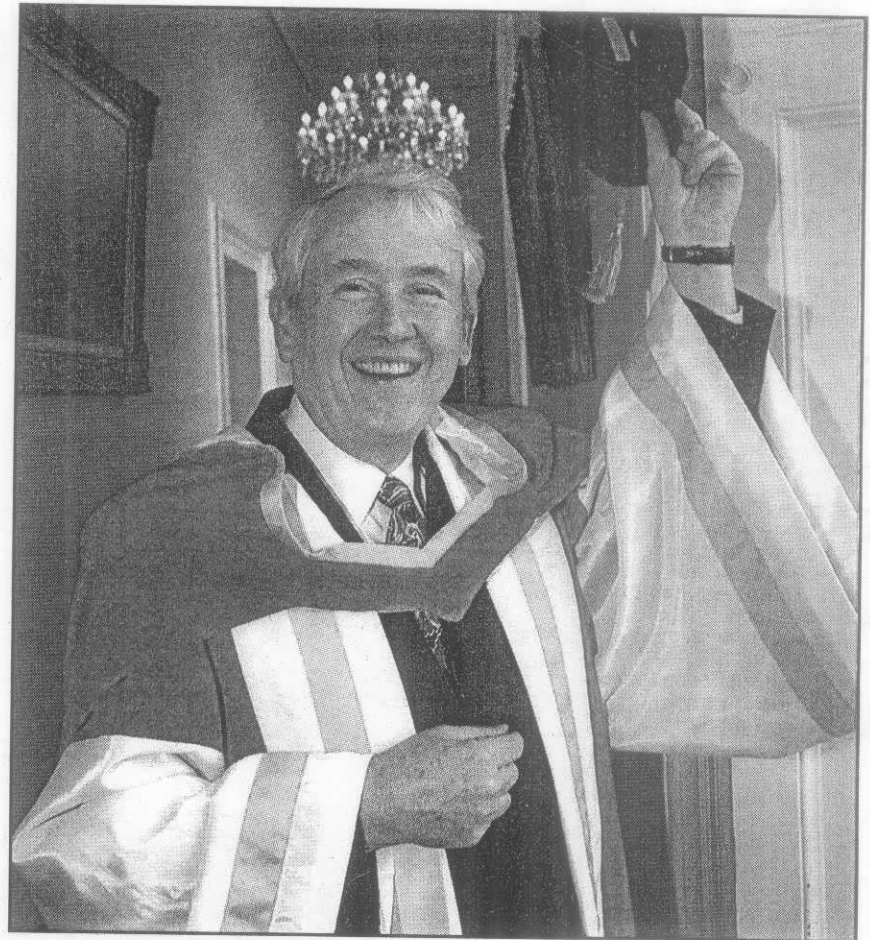
The Pulitzer Prize winner also helped the Glucksman Library at UL to acquire the Leonard Collection, a treasure trove of material encompassing literature, history, topography, politics and the social sciences.

During the four-day graduation ceremonies,

which will see over 2,300 graduates by this Friday, president Barry told graduates that nothing is impossible.

"This year the University of Limerick celebrated twenty years of something that many people thought would never happen...Twenty years of something that many people fought a long time to achieve. This year we celebrated twenty years of the University of Limerick," he said.

"If we didn't have so many motivated and opti-



Angela's Ashes author Frank McCourt at the University of Limerick following his conferring with an Honorary Doctorate of Letters in 1997

mistic people working on the aspirations of so many within our community, you and I would not be sitting here today. You have just graduated from an institution that, since 1972, has never taken no for an answer."

Despite the unprece-

dent economic difficulties graduates now face, he urged the new members of the alumni to "never doubt your ability."

"Yes, we are experiencing an unprecedented economic downturn, yes it will be difficult out

there. But we've had recessions before. During the 80s Ireland lost many of its bright minds to other countries and for a long time this situation hindered our social and economic development. This time things are different."

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