

Man held in Egypt is continue trip to Gaza

he authorities. re detained after ped on a public d to El-Araish. er staged a sit- est until their ere returned. oy is now back l, having being r at least 10 to difficulties yptian govern- ing entry to . They are now the final leg of ile journey to

Minister for lie O'Dea, was e who wrote to n embassy in sting safe pas- Lawlor. the Egyptian to assist her ough the Rafah d "treat her

fairly". "The Irish Government is committed to a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and also to humanitarian relief for the people of Gaza", he said.

Ms Lawlor is due to participate in the Gaza Freedom March on December 31 to mark the anniversary of last year's Israeli attack on Gaza.

Hundreds of delegates from 42 countries are expected to take part in the march, which will include at least 10 Irish people.

Ms Lawlor has been a high profile campaigner for the plight of people in Gaza, taking part in frequent demonstrations across the country, and had previously urged the Minister for Foreign

Affairs that the EU suspend special trading privileges with Israel as long as military action in Gaza continued.

Despite the obstacles faced in this trip, she said they "will try to show the people of Gaza that although the international community has abandoned them, civil society hasn't. I'm going on this march to show solidarity with the people of Gaza and to help to convince the Israeli government and the international community to lift the illegal and immoral siege on Gaza.

"I also want to be there to commemorate the 1,400 people in Gaza who were murdered at this time last year while the international community watched and did nothing."

McCourt's younger brother recalls a man of austerity who only took what he needed

Leader Reporter

THE story of how Frank McCourt survived typhoid fever and endured chronic conjunctivitis as a boy, and how later as an adult he survived cancer, is told for the first time by his younger brother, Alphie, in a fascinating article in the Villager Magazine in New York.

Frank McCourt, who won the Pulitzer prize for *Angela's Ashes* died last July 19, one month to the day before his 79th birthday.

"Frank's early miseries are well known, as are his teaching career, his monumental success as a writer and his vast international popularity as speaker and humorist. He has always been a strong presence in my life, along with my brothers, Malachy and Michael. I will never speak to him again, nor see him. I can't believe that. But I will have to get used to the idea. Death comes to, and for, everyone," Alphie said.

As is well known, seven children were born in the McCourt household. Three died and, as Malachy, his other well known brother, has pointed out, for many years the odds were in favour of the survivors. Three were gone and four still stood. Now the odds have shifted.

Frank was 10 years older than Alphie, who remembers him as being serious, austere, even disciplined, determined and with a sense of mission.

"Ten years distant from any possibility of an easy relationship with him, I was a little bit intimidated. Until the day I borrowed his bike, crashed it and awaited his wrath. Wrath never came. Frank dismissed the incident with-

out any fuss. In our Limerick, in the bleak harshness of the 1940s and 1950s, no one said I love you. But Frank didn't chide me, or shout or threaten. No, he forbore and, to a child reared on fire and brimstone, more especially on the Irish Catholic version, such forbearance, in the face of destruction and stupidity, was nothing short of love.

"In 1949, Frank left Limerick, the city of his rearing, and returned to New York, the city of his birth. We were left behind: mam, Mike and myself. Malachy was already away in England. Our hearts broke when he left.

"A long 10 years would elapse before I came to New York. And, a couple of years later, in 1961, when I was staying with Frank and his wife in

Brooklyn, Frank and I went for a few beers in a bar in downtown Manhattan. All too soon it is 4am, closing time, with the dawn coming up, too late and too early to take a subway or bus. At Frank's suggestion we walk across the Brooklyn Bridge. Two men, walking side by side: fat or thin, tall or small, rich or poor. There's a magic in that.

"We are nowhere near drunk. It would be hard to get drunk even on a succession of small 15-cent glasses of beer. But we are cheerful. By this time I am as tall as Frank, my oldest brother. Out of the night and into the day we walk, out of the darkness, into the light and the promise of the future. Only in retrospect, and only after many years, did I see the symbolism. To this day I

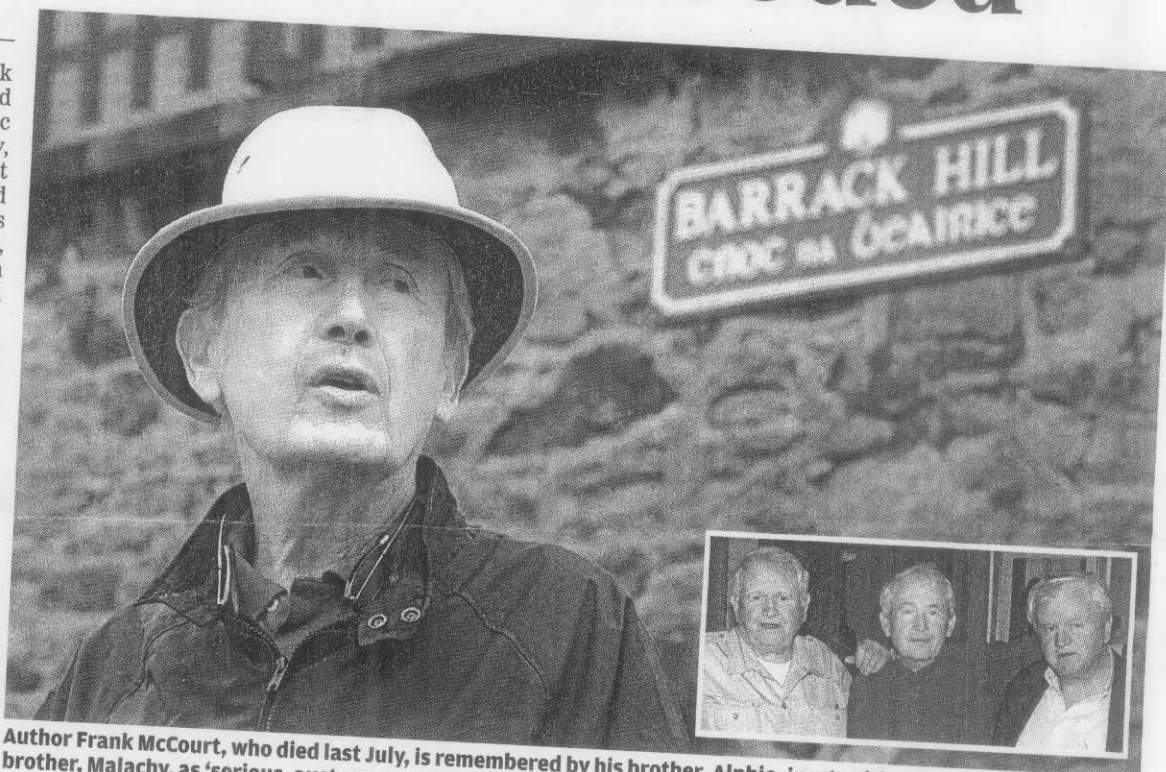
treasure it. Ever the teacher, Frank didn't send me on or walk behind me. Nor did he lead. The teacher walked beside me.

"Eight or nine years later, when I was living in Dublin and attending University College, Dublin, Frank came over to work on a doctorate at Trinity College. I was sharing an apartment with two friends. Frank lived elsewhere but he had a key to our apartment. One miserable rainy afternoon I came home to find him in the kitchen. Standing, still in his coat, he was eating a soft-boiled egg. One single, solitary, soft-boiled egg, with no bread, no butter, no tea in sight. That was his way. Only what he needed, that's what he took. He kept the faith.

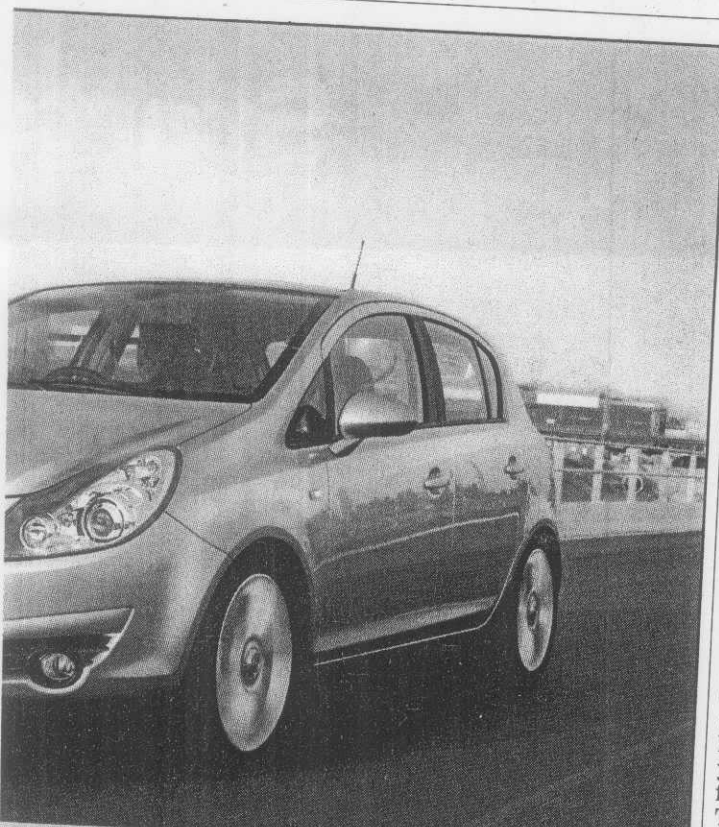
"Twenty-five years later, the success of his

first book, a memoir, left him bewildered. Throughout most of his adult life he had been 'only the teacher'. *Angela's Ashes*, a saga shot through with poverty and hunger, became the engine of his success. Now even *Gourmet* magazine was asking him to write a piece. 'Irony is my constant companion,' he would remark as he poked fun at his status as a newly minted big shot.

"Frank survived typhoid fever as a boy and endured chronic conjunctivitis. In the 1980s he would survive cancer. Having thoroughly embraced and enjoyed his dozen years of fame, he was now afflicted with melanoma. Treatments and hospital stays would follow, all to no avail," writes Alphie.



Author Frank McCourt, who died last July, is remembered by his brother, Alphie, inset, with Frank and their other brother, Malachy, as 'serious, austere, even disciplined, determined and with a sense of mission'



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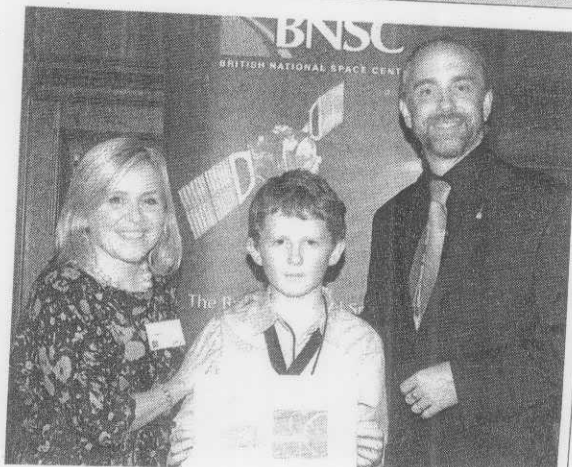
ish in your fireplace, or waste burner?

Over the moon: Finn wins NASA prize

Petula Martyn

A LIMERICK schoolboy was chosen by NASA to be a scientist for a day after his essay on the moon Tethys and Saturn's Rings was chosen from thousands of entries submitted by children from across the world.

Finn Bradley from Killoscully, Newport, was encouraged by his teachers at Limerick Educate Together school based at Mungret College, to enter the prestigious essay competition.



Chemifloc reaches a new watershed in water standards

SHANNON

Mike Dwane

A SHANNON chemical manufacturer is setting new standards on how to deliver safe drinking water to thousands of homes. Chemifloc has been in

ment chemicals we produce," said Chemifloc managing director Ed Storey.

"As the largest supplier in the land, we can also guarantee a continuity of supply for many weeks, made possible by our independent production facility