

## LEADER BRIEFS

## Hopes for Opera Centre

BUSINESSES could soon be invited to occupy vacated retail units on the site of the stalled €350 million Opera Shopping Centre in Limerick.

The new pilot Retail Incentive Scheme lists the units on Patrick Street and Rutland Street among those that could be occupied "in an effort to attract new blood to the Limerick city centre retail mix."

The scheme is subject to a public consultation process. City Manager Tom Mackey is still hopeful the new shopping centre will be built in the long term.

## Glass ceiling

A Women's Forum at the University of Limerick has heard that although there has been an increase in the number of women holding key positions in FTSE 100 companies - only five CEOs and two chairmen are female.

Speaking at the conference, Dr. Ita Richardson, chairperson of the UL Women's Forum, said that UL is committed to bringing gender inequality in leadership issues to the fore.

"There are now seven women professors at UL constituting 20 per cent of all those at that level in the university whereas the national average of female professors in Irish universities stands at only about 10 per cent," she said.

## A new way forward

THE University of Limerick will host a public event entitled 'Ireland has voted: What are the prospects for Reform?' on Tuesday, March 15, from 4pm-6pm at the Kemmy Business School.

Some of Ireland's leading academic commentators will be speaking at the event on various aspects of reform, including economist Dr Stephen Kinsella of UL.

# McCourt chair in writing to be set up

By ANNE SHERIDAN

A SPECIAL Chair in Creative Writing will be officially established in the University of Limerick next year in honour of Limerick's Pulitzer Prize winning author Frank McCourt.

The University of Limerick Foundation has now raised in excess of \$500,000 in New York to launch the Frank McCourt Chair in Creative Writing, in honour of the late author who passed away nearly two years ago.

A sum of \$1m will be required to fund the chair in writing over a five year period. Exact details of how people can apply for the position have yet to be advertised.

Appropriately, the chair in creative writing will have a particular focus on memoirs given the phenomenal success of McCourt's first memoir, *Angela's Ashes*, which has sold in excess of six million copies worldwide.

Last week, former United States President Bill Clinton led tributes to the famous author in a ceremony where he was posthumously honoured by leading Irish and American philanthropists.

"Everyone has a story to tell in life but Frank wrote uniquely about his, and in doing so, has inspired many others to put their own stories down on paper", said President Clinton.

"I love that the University of Limerick will bring creative writing and storytelling back to Ireland in a fresh way through this Chair."

Leading literary figures, including the New York based Irish writer Colum McCann, joined Frank's widow, Ellen, and his brothers, Malachy and Alphie for an evening in New York to celebrate the memory of the renowned Irish writer.

Also present was Loretta Brennan Glucksman, Chairman of the American Ireland Fund, whose late husband Lewis Glucksman, also generously donated to UL.

UL president, Professor Don Barry, remembered Frank's commitment to the



Professor Don Barry, president of Limerick University, Frank's widow Ellen McCourt, President Bill Clinton and Loretta Brennan Glucksman, Chairman of the American Ireland Fund, at the launch of the chair in writing

PICTURES: JAMES HIGGINS

advancement of the university during his time as a director of the UL Foundation.

"Frank McCourt was a true friend of the University of Limerick, and it is highly appropriate that we honour his legacy in this way", said Professor Barry.

David Cronin, chief executive of UL Foundation, said the continuous support of Irish-American philanthropists has enabled the university to effect positive change in the region. "The Frank McCourt Chair is a perfect example of how strategic targeted investment will impact a new generation of young aspiring writers", he added.

Frank McCourt, who received an honorary doctorate of letters from the university, passed away in July 2009.

Close to \$200 million has been raised through the UL Foundation's international network since it was established in 1989.



UL president and professor Don Barry presents former US President Bill Clinton with a commemorative issue of Frank McCourt's Teacher Man in New York

## Public asked to be a hero this coming Daffodil Day

By STEPHEN KINSELLA

THE Irish Cancer Society were joined by Dell employees and student's from Laurel Hill in the People's Park to highlight the countdown to Daffodil Day on Friday March 25.

The society is encouraging everyone across Limerick to become "an ordinary hero for a day" by either volunteering to collect or contribute to the cause. All funds raised will go towards the provision of free patient care nursing services for people affected by cancer.

Maire O'Flaherty, who has been Co-ordinator in Limerick for Daffodil Day for 20 years now, is hoping Limerick can make a major contribution to the national target of €3.8m, in order to help meet increasing demands on patient services.

"We want as much support as we can possibly get, because as we all know, it's for a very good cause," said Marie.

Last year €110,000 alone was spent on night nurses in Limerick to help cancer patients. Maire said she was

very thankful for all the support they had received down the years and were hopeful for another good year. "I would like to thank everyone who has supported us, from those who have collected, supplied flowers and to those who have contributed."

Padraig Healy, of Dell Limerick, said "Daffodil Day is a very special day on the Irish calendar for thousands of Irish Cancer Society volunteers, people going through their cancer journeys and healthcare

professionals involved in providing Cancer care. Dell has a long tradition of supporting the Irish Cancer society through a range of fundraising and volunteering activities."

The Irish Cancer Society are calling on anyone who can make themselves available to take to the streets and sell pins, silks and fresh blooms raising vital funds for a cause that everyone can be proud to get behind. If you are interested in volunteering in any form contact the Irish Cancer Society.



Students from Laurel Hill with Maura O'Flaherty, co-ordinator, Frances Hourigan, daffodil day committee, and Maureen Walsh, daffodil day volunteer at the launch of this year's appeal

PICTURE: ADRIAN BUTLER