Pat Cox to be made freeman of the city

By DEARBHLA LOCHAY

LIMERICK'S European Parliament president Pat Cox is getting the highest honour of the city this week.

He will be accorded the Freedom of the City on Friday afternoon in City Hall.

And a special meeting to honour him will be held at Limerick County Hall earlier on Friday.

"There are a number of reasons Limerick City Council wanted to give this to the Freedom of the City. He is the president of the European Parliament which effectively makes him the second most senior politician in international terms, second only to the president of the United States," Mayor Shaffiey, a personal friend of Mr. Cox for over 40 years, said.

Mr. Cox, from Fort Mary in Limerick, now lives in Cork with his wife Kathy and their children.

"He has quite an astonishing achievement in any standards. A European politician is an independent, a senior politician in a city of the size of this city which is a very big honour for him," Mayor Shaffiey said.

Mr. Cox, a former journalist, is also a former Progressive Democrat TD for Cork South Central.

He said it was a "terrific honour" for Limerick and for Ireland that Mr. Cox is president of the European Parliament. The Mayor believes the president's appeal lies in his ability to relate to people.

"Undoubtedly, it enhances the esteem in which our country and people are held internationally," Mr. Cox said.

"I am absolutely delighted to be here in Limerick today to receive the Freedom of the City," Mr. Cox said.

The special council meeting in City Hall will be attended by all members of the council, the Mayor said.

And Mr. Cox will be extended the Freedom of the City in the ceremony that will take place.

He also has an amazing ability to relate to people at every level of society and he's always had an ability to treat people courteously, graciously and most important equally," Mayor Shaffiey said.

Coupled with that is his ability to simplify the most complex issues, he explained.

Mr. Cox is due to address a session of the House of Representatives in Cyprus this week, where he will be made a freeman of the city.

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