

NG WILLIAM O'DEA: A FIRST STEP INTO THE LIMELIGHT

THE entry of William O'Dea into the political limelight marks the first step in the realisation of a dream that was born fourteen years ago when the Killeely candidate first joined Fianna Fail.

But it's not surprising that the 28-year-old County Limerickman should have emerged—after something of a cliff-hanger between himself and Martin Carroll, County VEC chief—as the “third man” nominated as a candidate in East Limerick at the recent convention.

For O'Dea is a man with a passion for hard work. His academic credentials prove it.

The eldest son of a family of six (three sons and three daughters), the new candidate showed his prowess in the academic field when he qualified in law at U.C.D. in 1973.

Success

The significance of that success was marked by the fact that the young academic brought honour and distinction to his area by achieving top place among first-class honours students at U.C.D.

His scholastic brilliance was further indicated, a year later, when he achieved first place in his final bar examinations.

And adding to his already distinguished academic career was his qualifying in 1975 in the field of accountancy.

O'Dea's achievements in the educational sphere were not necessarily carved out of some natural or incredible genius. It was this passion for learning and hard work that drove him forward with such immense dedication and determination to get ahead.

And succeed he did. Today, the dynamic County Limerickman, who works at least 16 hours every day and sleeps an average six-hour night, lectures in European Studies in NIHE and lectures in financial accounting one day a week at UCD.

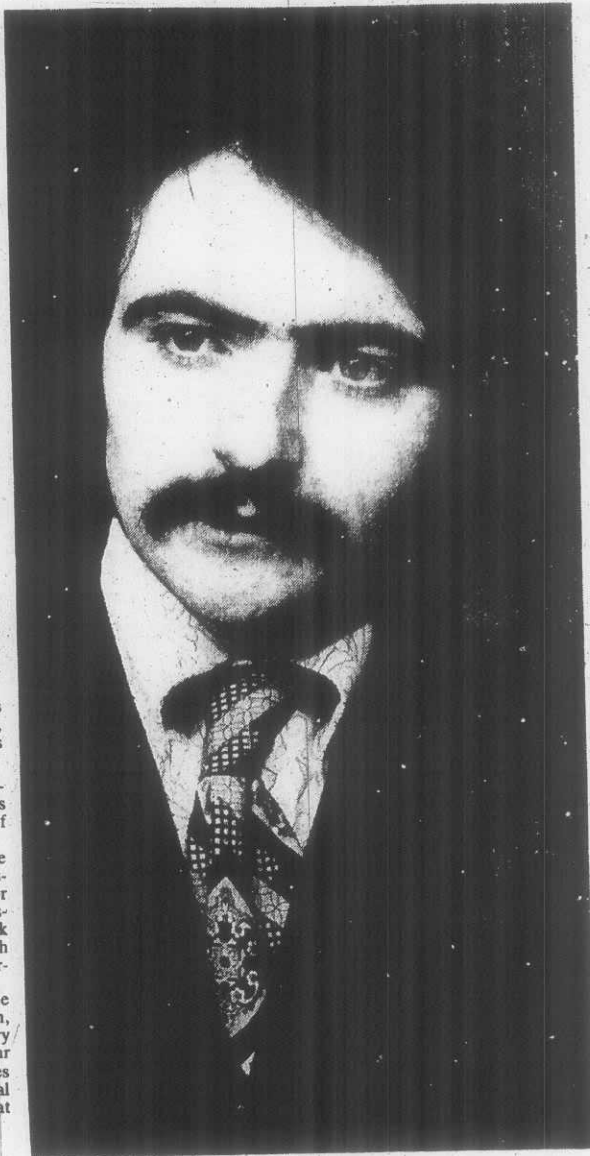
Welfare

In addition, he finds time to write articles for Business and Finance and Solicitors' Gazette as well as operating a weekly advice service—on tax and welfare problems—in the farming section of the Limerick Leader.

Arising out of this he is more often than not inundated with callers to his family's house at Killeely—all seeking to avail of the expert assistance that he can—and usually does—offer to people.

It wasn't until 1973 that O'Dea's interest in politics became more active. And it was only natural that he should seek to fly the Fianna Fail banner as he originated from a traditionally “Warriors of Destiny” family deep in the heart of the Golden Vale.

Central to this is the fact that his late father, Thomas O'Dea was, for many years, chairman of the Killeely Fianna Fail Cumann.



William O'Dea

Now a member of the Fianna Fail's National Executive—membership of which is going into its third year—the energetic County Limerickman, who is a barrister-at-law, has built up a reputation for expertise in the area of taxation.

Tax

And it is on this issue which he feels strongly. He wants to create a better tax system in this country than the one that currently prevails and which has been so much the focus of criticism in recent times—and not least from the PAYE sector.

But he is convinced that Fine Gael's stated policy on tax reform is not the way to go about it. Commenting on this, he says:

“I think the Fine Gael tax proposals are nothing less than a massive con-job. Garret FitzGerald says he is going to give tax incentives to workers by reducing the standard income tax rate to 25 per cent.

“But where is the money going to come from—£293 million according to the Fine Gael leader. He says he is not trying to buy his way into government but, as far as I'm concerned that is exactly what he is doing.”

Computerisation—and its effects on society—is another area on which the new nominee holds strong views. The first point he makes is that people need have no fear of technology, especially as far as employment is concerned.

Changes

He says that the whole western world is undergoing great economic changes because of rapid developments in the computer and technology fields. But it is our responsibility to respond to these changes and to enlighten society on them.

Says O'Dea: “I am deeply concerned about the effects of computerisation on society and one of my goals would be to help educate and enlighten that society on this. And that means starting at primary school level.”

Pointing to the importance of NIHE as the nucleus of technological development in this region, the Fianna Fail candidate states that as well as developing scientific studies there, it is also vital that on a political level a greater awareness was achieved.

Towards that end, one of his ambitions would be to strive to have a scientific and economic branch set up within the Fianna Fail party.

But that being so, his more immediate ambition, obviously, is to help Fianna Fail to get that vital third seat in a five seat constituency—something he feels they must achieve if they are to win this most unpredictable of elections.

Honoured

“Firstly, I must say that I am deeply honoured to have been selected to represent the party and I am confident that I can help it get that third seat,” says the Fianna Fail nominee.

His interest in politics, he points out, stems from a genuine desire to get a better deal for the people of this region—and the country. With this penchant for hard work there is no doubt that the popular County Limerickman will fight “tooth and nail” to fulfil the party's confidence in him.

Whether he'll be successful in reaching the dizzy political heights of Dail Eireann, the next two weeks will tell.

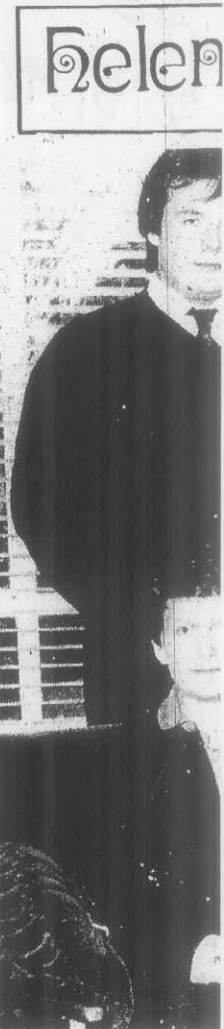
Engaged to be married, the industrious O'Dea engages in the art of sports supporter for Killeely-Dromkeen and Limerick hurling teams, when free from the demands of his calling.

Victory

Of outgoing disposition, this young political hopeful is also not short on good humour. In a brief formal address to the convention after his triumph—and to some extent shock—victory, he used the lofty figure of U.S. President Ronald Reagan to express how he felt about his nomination.

Pointing out that Mr. Reagan described his own victory as the “most humbling moment of his life,” William O'Dea said he felt the very same way. But lest the unequal comparison be consolidated out of all proportion, the delighted candidate swiftly added:

“I'm not comparing myself to Ronald Reagan. I am, after all, much younger than he—and he's much better looking than me!”



Alderman Frank Prendergast from left: E

FRANK

WHEN dealing Frank Prendergast is, of course, seek Dail seat under banner of Labour Limerick East, on afford to be precis

Prendergast, the man, Trade Union self-educated in the attainment sphere. ical man par excellence the veritable sen experience, idealism pered by realism, mately a humanitar

But Frank Prendergast's overt integrity and open service rendered show should use his privileged achievement of honest while his background tise and credentials eq admirably for the full political office:

Background

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EAMONN CREGAN: WHY HE STOOD FOR F.F.

LIMERICK COUNTY