

# Art Society celebrate top honour

By AINE FITZGERALD



Tom Ryan, artist

MEMBERS of Limerick Art Society are in celebratory mood this week following confirmation that local artist Tom Ryan is to be honoured with the Freedom of the City.

According to chairperson Margaret Meagher, the award is a well-deserved acknowledgment of a man who loves his native city with a passion and has freely given of his time to promoting art in the city.

"We are absolutely delighted that Mayor Joe Leddin and his councillors agreed our proposal to bestow this great honour upon Tom Ryan, who has been the Limerick

Art Society's President for the past 20 plus years," said Margaret — a sentiment echoed by Margaret Ray, Honorary Secretary.

"To our minds, Tom has put Limerick on the cultural and artistic map. His paintings are of out-

standing high standard — equal to the old Masters. He is one of the greatest living Irish artists this country has ever produced," she said.

Tom Ryan was born in Davis Street in 1929. He went to the Christian Brothers' School and from there to the Limerick School of Art.

He was then awarded a scholarship to the National College of Art and Design in Dublin, where he studied under Sean Keating, another famous Limerick artist.

Renowned for his portraits, landscapes, townscapes and still-life paintings, Tom has received many honours, here and abroad, including an honorary doctorate from the University of Limerick.

He is a devout Catholic and is also a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre.

Now receiving the highest honour that the city can bestow upon an individual, the Limerick Art Society are particularly delighted that Tom will be recognised by his own people for his talents and achievements.

"When the new Mayor Joe Leddin was elected, we immediately got in touch with him and started the ball rolling for the Freedom of the City. We showed him the evidence of why we believed Tom deserved to be made Freeman of the City, and asked him to please give it some serious consideration. He was very amenable to our suggestion and now it has come to pass," explained Gerda Hughes, vice chairperson, concluding "as somebody once said to Tom Ryan, "Shur you are one of our own!"

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