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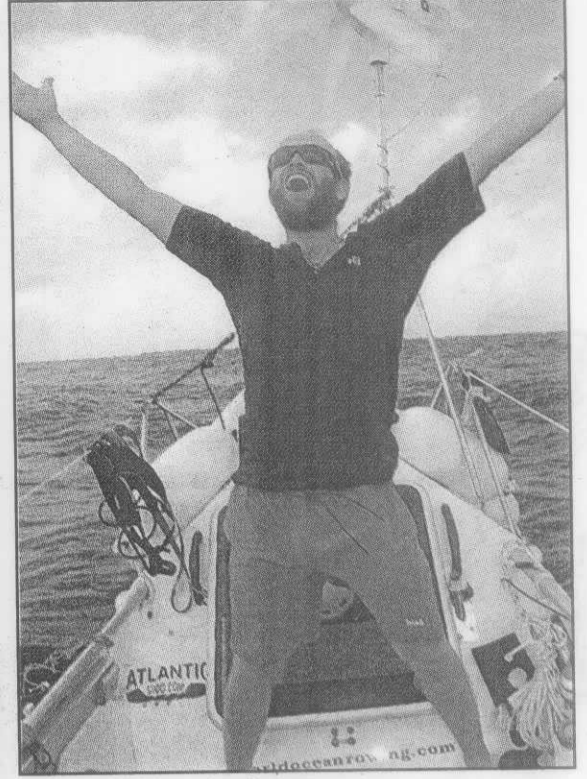
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Mike Jones and the crew of Sara G, and right, Mike celebrates arriving in Barbados after rowing across the Atlantic Ocean

UL rower's Atlantic triumph honoured

■ University to host a reception for east to west oarsman

Petula Martyn

THE operations manager of the University of Limerick Activity Centre who rowed across the Atlantic Ocean, will be honoured for his great achievement at a reception hosted by UL President Don Barry.

Barbados is a beautiful sight for anybody who arrives on its shores, but for Mike Jones, Barbados represented the finishing line after rowing 5,000 kilometres for 57 days and 20 hours.

The voyage, which started from the Port de Plaisance Marina in Agadir, Morocco, on January 12, was an attempt to row the Atlantic from East to West on the traditional trade wind route. The

voyage was the first to use Agadir as a start port for an ocean row and was only the second ever ocean rowing voyage to start from a Moroccan port.

Mr Jones, who is originally from Cork, received a warm reception when he returned to his adopted home in Killaloe, just days after completing his epic journey. Friends and colleagues at the UL activity centre followed his progress which he documented on his website www.atlantic5000.com.

The international crew of the Sara G, a specially designed ocean rowing boat, consisted of five men and one woman and was skippered by Matt Craughwell from the UK.

The boat has three rowing positions on the deck, catering for a crew of six - three rowing while three rest. The shift pattern was set at a gruelling two hours on and two hours off.

Mr Jones and Peter Williams became the seventh and eighth Irish men to achieve the feat and they are the first people from Cork to row across any ocean.

The 29-year-old applied for the crew last year even though he had never rowed before. "I'd had the idea in mind for a few years but I figured I'd have a year or two to learn how to row, however last September the opportunity came up and it seemed like the right time.

"I was very fortunate in my

line of work to have the backing from my employers the University of Limerick Sport Department and to have access to the renowned sporting facilities of the university including the new boat house which hosts Ireland's only indoor rowing tank."

Upon arriving at Barbados, he said he was delighted to have completed the challenge "and I have to say I enjoyed almost every moment of it, there were so many highs and of course some lows but it was an amazing experience and something I am delighted to have achieved."

As part of the row, Mr Jones raised money for Milford Care Centre in Limerick and Marymount Hospice in Cork.

IT professionals to lay ground for economic growth

Kevin Cronin

MINISTER for Lifelong Learning Seán Haughey said that information professionals would help to lay the basis for future economic growth, at the Librarians' Information Literacy Annual Conference (LILAC) at the Strand Hotel in Limerick this Monday.

Thanking Jerald Cavanagh, Librarian of the Limerick Institute of Technology for the invitation, he said that information literacy and lifelong learning are critical to the success of every individual, organisation and institution in the global information society.

"Enhanced information literacy will underpin and drive lifelong learning, and when harnessed together they can substantially improve a person's set of options and choices. They



Minister Sean Haughey, keynote speaker at the Librarians' conference in the Strand Hotel

strengthen the quality of education and training in formal school settings, preceding entry into the workforce and later in informal vocational or on-the-job training settings," Minister Haughey said.

Minister Haughey said the Government in 2000 had established lifelong learning as the governing principle of its educational policy - to promote

competitiveness and employment, address inter-generational poverty and disadvantage, and promote democracy and social cohesion.

Founded in 2005, LILAC has grown to become a major international conference for information professionals, attracting keynote speakers in the information literacy field from around the globe.

"I commend you for your achievements in building links across the profession as a whole and encouraging librarians and information professionals from all sectors to attend. I would also like to pay special tribute to the Library Network Support Services which is hosting this conference," Minister Haughey added. The Network is a Government funded initiative, listing among its project partners Limerick Institute of Technology, Institute of

Technology Tralee, Mary Immaculate College Limerick and the University of Limerick.

"Lifelong Learning recognises that learning takes place in a wide variety of settings - not only in classrooms, but also through all the tasks carried out by individuals at their place of work, in voluntary activities and at home, throughout their entire lifetime.

There is now a widespread appreciation of the need for upskilling and the continual training of individuals in the workforce. This is particularly evident during these challenging economic times, when now, more than ever Ireland needs to maintain its competitiveness and provide a highly skilled, productive and flexible workforce, which will attract high-value inward investment," he added.

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