

Heane, J. J.

An outstanding sprinter in the very early days of the G.A.A. and member of the Olympic Games Committee he still directs athletics in Ireland. Won 1898 & 1899 all Ire. S.F. Champs. with Dublin Geraldines.

Mr. John J. Keane, who died yesterday in the Portobello Nursing Home, Dublin, at the age of 86, had a lifetime association with Irish athletics.

A native of Anglesboro', Co. Limerick, he was owner of the firm of Messrs. Charles Dunne and Co., Smithfield Market, Dublin. In 1900 he won the 100 yards hurdling championship of Ireland. When he ceased to take an active part in competitive athletics he became prominent in the administrative side of the work of the G.A.A., being elected chairman of the Athletic Council of that body. When the National Athletic and Cycling Association was founded in 1922, Mr. Keane was elected first president of the new body, and filled that office for many years. He was the representative in Ireland on the Olympic Games Council for a number of years. In 1932 he represented Ireland at the Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

I was at three funerals within a week, Mr. J. J. Keane devoted his life's leisure to Irish games and athletics. Remarkable man this. Entered business as a junior clerk in a corn and hay store; rose to be managing director of the firm and finally its owner—industry, judgment and integrity. I knew him as a powerful dashing midfielder for Geraldines of Dublin; he won the 1898 and 1899 All Ireland with them. He was a fearless attacker and tireless battler. A real champion hurdler; he had little skilled training, yet won the G.A.A. 120 yards hurdles championship in 1900. He became head of the G.A.A. section of Athletics as Chairman of the Athletic Council—an able administrator—straight and blunt in all his dealings. He suffered imprisonment during the troubled times for smuggling arms to the Republicans. In close association with Griffith and Collins he set to work to secure recognition for Ireland in the Olympics and succeeded. He founded and became first President of the N.A. and C.A. on the establishment for the Irish Free State and united all Irish athletes. He was for many years a prominent member of the International Olympic Council. All his efforts to keep Irish athletes together failed and he retired from public life in 1936. He was a most charitable man and rendered much help to the deserving poor. My sympathy to Mr. J. J. Bresnihan of Castletown Conyers, Co. Limerick, on the death of his wife, an admirable lady. J. J. Bresnihan was a wonderful all-round athlete, quite up to Tom Kiely's class. The pair never met. The death of Sean O'Ciarsey, native of Waterford, removes one of our best Gaelic writers. A delightfully humorous essayist and story teller, his short stories will live long. Mr. Con Murphy, the famous Kerry midfielder of a past generation, was a football genius. He seemed to fascinate the ball; he was a glorious fielder and a perfect placer of the ball. He won five All Ireland medals and scores of tournaments. He was a champion plougher of his period.