

By JOHN HOGAN

THE family of former Limerick mayor Michael Hourigan are grieving this Monday following the tragic death of the councillor's 21-year-old son Patrick at the weekend.

Mr Hourigan, who suffered from epilepsy, was discovered unconscious near his home on the North Circular Road

on Friday evening.

He is understood to have gone for a walk on his own before collapsing on the footpath shortly after leaving his house. The young man is believed to have suffered a seizure.

A passer-by called the emergency services and Mr Hourigan was taken to the Mid-Western Regional Hospital but doctors were unable to save him.

Cllr Kevin Kiely offered his condolences and those of the whole council to his Fine Gael colleague and his family this Monday.

"Michael was an outstanding Mayor and I know that his family are held in the highest esteem by every member of the City Council. I would like to offer our sincere condolences to Michael, his wife Pat and all their family at this very difficult time," he said.

Cllr Hourigan was elected as Mayor of Limerick in 2004.

Patrick Hourigan had been studying architecture and had also worked with an architecture firm for a period in Dublin. He is survived by six siblings, including a twin sister, Kate.

The Hourigan family have asked that donations if desired should be made to BRAINWAVE, an association that helps people suffering

from epilepsy.

A spokesperson for the association said that its Limerick members were devastated to hear of Mr Hourigan's death.

"We would offer our sincerest condolences to the Hourigan family and we are also very appreciative that they would ask people to make a donation to BRAINWAVE," said the spokesperson.

Griffin's Funeral Home can be contacted on 415000 for details on how to make a donation.

Patrick Hourigan will be reposing at the family home in Carraig Donn on the North Circular Road from 4pm until 8pm today. Requiem Mass will be in Our Lady of the Rosary church tomorrow at 11am. The burial will be afterwards at Stradbally Cemetery in Castleconnell.

Thousands attend Kilcornan memorial to climber Ger

By DAVID HURLEY

OVER 2,000 people attended a memorial service in Kilcornan yesterday for climber Gerard McDonnell who died a fortnight ago while descending from the summit of K2.

The 37-year-old engineer died when he was hit by falling ice less than 48 hours after he became the first Irish person to conquer what is regarded as the world's most dangerous mountain.

Six white doves were released during the emotional service, which took place at Kilcornan Community Centre, the same venue where hundreds gathered in 2003 to welcome Gerard home after he reached the summit of Mount Everest.

During his homily, Fr Joe Noonan described Gerard as a "humble hero" who met his death

while helping and caring for others. "Ger could not explain his fascination with mountain climbing any other way except to say it was such a spiritual thing. He even referred to it as being an honour to die on a mountain," said Fr Noonan.

JJ McDonnell was overcome with emotion as he paid tribute to his brother. "Everything that Gerard turned his hand to he did with pride, his love of his family, friends, parish, county, province and country was clear for all to see. He was 100 per cent Irish in his love and passion for culture, language, music and sport. Gerard you can pick em, pack em, stack em but there is only ever going to be one Gerard McDonnell he is irreplaceable as a son, brother, brother-in-law, uncle partner and loyal friend, Gerard you are our hero," he said.

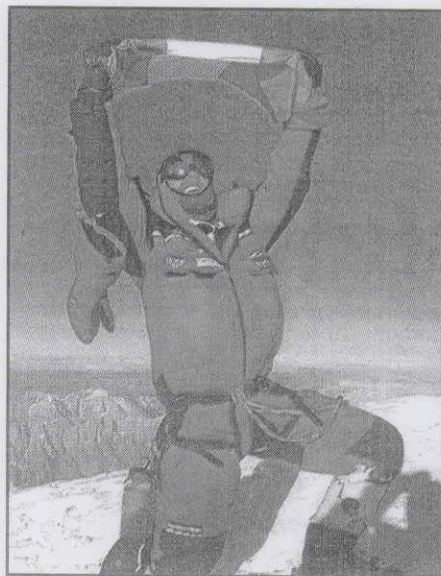
The President and the

Taoiseach were represented by their aides de camp while three members of the Norit Expedition Team, including injured Dutch climber Wilco Van Rooijen who led Gerard's team to the summit of K2, were also among the mourners.

Ciara Cleary, who was on the expedition team with Gerard that climbed Mount Everest in 2003, also spoke at yesterday's Mass along with mountaineer Pat Falvey.

"Gerard's strength and honour in spending over three and a half hours at 8,300m attempting to rescue three other climbers while well aware of the risks to his own life, make him stand out as a real hero," said Ms Cleary.

Another team member, Marrten Van Eck, presented Gerard's grieving mother Gertie with a candle.



Above, Ger McDonnell holds the tricolour aloft as he became the first Irish person to climb K2, and, right, his family taking a moment of reflection at his memorial service at Kilcornan Community Centre PICTURE: BRENDAN GLEESON



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