

In Memoriam

Timothy Trevor West (1938 – 2012) A Tribute by Cyril J Smyth, Chairman D.U.C.A.C.



Timothy Trevor West was born on 8th May, 1938 in Midleton, Co. Cork. Trinity College, sport and sports' administration were already in his genes. His father, Timothy West, was a graduate of Dublin University (B.A. 1924, M.A. 1929). After graduation Timothy Snr. taught at Mountjoy School where he coached the Senior Rugby XV. He played rugby with Wanderers RFC and became Captain in 1925–26. He gained three caps for Leinster in the back row. He was also Hon. Secretary of the Leinster Schools Rugby Football Committee before taking up his appointment as headmaster of Midleton College, Co. Cork, in 1928, a post he held until 1960. Midleton College prospered under his leadership. High sporting and academic standards were pursued and achieved. Timothy Snr. continued his rugby career with Cork Constitution RFC. He then applied his rugby experience and expertise to refereeing. Timothy Snr. attained inter-provincial referee status when he refereed the Connacht v Leinster match in 1939. He was elected Hon. President of Cork Constitution RFC in 1939–40. He was a founding member of the Munster Schools Rugby Football Committee and was to remain its Hon. Secretary for 40 years. Timothy Snr. became Hon. President of the Munster Branch IRFU in 1962–63, the season in which Munster won its fourth outright Inter-provincial Championship.

Trevor West was educated at Midleton College to Intermediate Certificate level. He completed his secondary education at The High School, Dublin. Trevor entered Trinity College Dublin in 1956. He was elected to Scholarship in Pure Mathematics in 1958 and celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his election at the New Scholars' and Fellows' Dinner in 2008. He graduated B.A. with 1st Class Honours in Mathematics in 1960.

Trevor West was awarded a prestigious Overseas Scholarship by the Commissioners for the Exhibition of 1851 to study for his PhD at St John's College,

University of Cambridge. The Great Exhibition of 1851 was held in The Crystal Palace, London. The exhibition was a popular and financial success, making a surplus of £186,000 (approximately £21M in 2012). A trust fund, established and administered by the 1851 Royal Commissioners, provides scholarships, fellowships and grants for research in science and engineering. Trevor's research supervisor was Dr Frank Smithies, F.R.S.E., a distinguished mathematician who has been described as "*the father of functional analysis in Great Britain*". Smithies had a reputation for pointing his students to areas of mathematical research where he had a shrewd inkling that interesting problems existed. He guided T.T. West into the field of operators, i.e., symbols or functions representing mathematical operations (the actions or procedures which produce new values from one or more input values).

After graduating from Cambridge, Trevor's first academic appointment was to the Department of Mathematics in the University of Glasgow. He then taught at the University of California, Los Angeles [UCLA] before joining the staff of the Department of Pure Mathematics in Trinity College as a Lecturer in October 1966. In this role he succeeded in teaching mathematics to large classes of engineers with panache, enthusiasm, and repartee. He was elected a Fellow of Trinity College Dublin in 1970 and to Membership of the Royal Irish Academy in 1972. Trevor was promoted to Associate Professor of Mathematics in 1977. He became a Senior Fellow of Trinity College Dublin in 2000.

Trevor formally retired from the Department of Mathematics in September 2004. His 38 years on the staff of the Department were celebrated with a *Westfest* symposium on 19–20 December 2005. Trevor's principal research field was operator theory. One of his seminal papers in 1966, published in *Proceedings of the Edinburgh Mathematical Society*, was entitled "*Operators with a single spectrum*". In life, however, Trevor was an operator with a kaleidoscopic spectrum of talents which he brought to bear on the multitude of functions he undertook both in Trinity College and in wider Irish community.

Trevor served as an Assistant Junior Dean from 1968 to 1970 and then as Junior Dean and Registrar of Chambers from 1974 to 1978. In addition, he was a Reserve Assistant Junior Dean from 1983 to 1986 and from 1997 to 2004. He was by all accounts a JD very much in the tradition and mould of R.B. McDowell and Brendan Kennelly. His active engagement in sport in College gave him great insight into the antics of students. His strong understanding of and relationship with students earned him their esteem and respect. Trevor served on the Board of the College as a representative of the Junior Fellows from 1984–88, 1992–94 and 1999–2000 and as an elected member for the Fellows' and Fellow Professors' constituency from 2000–04. He was a member of the Central Fellowship Committee from 1987–90, of the Foundation Scholarship–Central Scholarship Committee from 1988–96 and of the Chapel Committee from 1991–96. He was Chairman of the Fellows from 1990–93. He was also a member of the Executive Committee of the TCD Trust from 1975 to 1987 and, following the amalgamation of the TCD Trust and the TCD Association

into the TCD Association and Trust in 1987, a member of its Standing Committee through to his retirement in 2004.

Trevor West was, with a brief break, one of Dublin University's three Senators for twelve years. He was elected to the 12th Seanad Éireann (1969–1973) on 19 November 1970 at a by-election for the University of Dublin constituency occasioned by the death of Dr Owen Sheehy-Skeffington, Department of French, who had served as a member of the 8th, 9th, 11th and 12th Seanad Éireann. He was re-elected to the 13th Seanad in 1973 and to the 14th Seanad in 1977. Trevor lost his seat in the 1981 election, but was re-elected to the 16th Seanad (1982–83). He lost his seat again at the 1983 election. He was throughout his time in Seanad Éireann an Independent Senator. Along with his fellow Trinity Senator Mary Robinson he championed many social issues including the liberalisation of the availability of contraception. During his period as a Senator he was placed under considerable pressure to choose between his academic career in Trinity and a career in politics. However Provost F.S.L. Lyons supported the principle of people in Trevor's position being able to contribute to Irish governance without resigning their main occupations.

From 1980–82 Senator West was President of the Irish Association for Cultural, Economic and Social Relations, a body dedicated to the promotion of communication, understanding and co-operation between all people of Ireland, North and South. Trevor earnestly believed that sport was a major vehicle for breaking down sectarian passion and prejudice. He also engaged actively in the peace process, with possible risk to himself, to get the paramilitary organisations within the Unionist community, the UDA and UDF, to the talks' table to break the cycle of violence, intimidation, and revenge killings.

Trevor's own sporting forte was cricket. He played for County Cork, Phoenix and Munster. He was a useful, lower order to middle order batsman and a leg spinner bowler. In 1961, while he was at Cambridge, he toured Ireland with Peterhouse College. On 21 June against the Dublin University XI, he took 4/40 in College Park, including the wicket of his brother John, leg before for a single run, and held two catches. Having dismissed D.U.C.C. for 144 runs, Peterhouse went on to win by a wicket in an exciting and tense finish with the last Cambridge pair on the pitch. For the record Trevor scored 7 runs in Peterhouse's 145 total.

Trevor West's contributions to College sport and to Irish University sport have been considerable. He served for 43 years on the Dublin University Central Athletic Club Executive Committee from 1966. To this role he brought passion, drive, vitality, vibrancy, sparkle, energy and total commitment, attributes that would remain with him throughout his years of service to sport in College. Trevor succeeded Simon Newman as Hon. Treasurer of D.U.C.A.C. in 1967, a post he would occupy for nine years. He ably helped to fend off College's plans to build residences on the rugby pitch in 1970–71. He saw the need for a permanent secretary in the D.U.C.A.C. office and was instrumental in the appointment of Joan Taylor to that post in 1970. In

1961 the Pavilion Bar had opened with very limited opening hours and trading conditions by edict of the Board. In 1971 Trevor, with Aidan Duggan and Paul Coulson, examined the feasibility of setting up the Pavilion Bar with regular trading hours and adequate facilities. This was brought to fruition in 1972 with the appointment of a permanent steward. In 1975 the Students' Union tried to seize control of the disbursement of the Capitation Fund through a student referendum. Trevor mobilised support from the College's sporting community to defeat the referendum.

When John V. Luce retired as Chairman of D.U.C.A.C., Trevor was the obvious choice as his successor, becoming only the 4th Chairman after William E. Thrift [1919–37], Harry Thrift [1937–56] and John V. Luce [1956–76]. Trevor stepped down as Chairman of D.U.C.A.C. in 2009 after 33 years in the post, the longest serving incumbent. As Chairman of D.U.C.A.C. he oversaw the development of the Luce Hall Sports Centre project to its completion. Trevor served as Hon. President of Dublin University Association Football Club from 1968 to 1971. He was Hon. President of Dublin University Cricket Club from 1974 to 1980 and again from 1983 to 1984, during which periods he worked hard to strengthen the Club's profile in College. He was instrumental in an Irish Universities XI first competing against the Leprechauns in College Park in July 1972. He also umpired the Universities v Leprechauns matches for several years. The Irish Universities Cricket Association was founded two years later. Trevor was a driving force in the development of the Irish Universities Cricket tournament. This led to an Irish Universities team, drawn from all Irish Universities, being allowed to compete in the British Universities Championship, replacing a team drawn solely from Queen's University of Belfast and the University of Ulster. Trevor West, Murray Power (QUB) and Alan Sharp (UU) argued that such an Irish Universities team would be fitter for the stiff opposition in the British Universities Championship than a team drawn from only the two Northern University Clubs. The fruits of these endeavours led to the Irish Universities XI winning the British Championship in 1986 and 1988 and to the successful hosting of the British Championships in Dublin in 1985.

Upon the completion of the Luce Hall, Trevor West pushed for the appointment of a Physical Recreation Officer. In January 1981, Terence McAuley took up this post. He was promoted to Facilities Officer in 1985, including responsibility for sports facilities. Trevor had taught Terry mathematics during his undergraduate years. The pair developed a very close working synergy over their 28 years together in sport in Trinity. The need for a larger and better equipped Sport Centre in College became critical in the 1990's with the considerable expansion in student numbers. To raise funds towards the project a referendum for a Sports Levy, to be paid by all students over five years, had to be passed. Trevor West again engaged persuasively with the College's sporting community to ensure approval of the levy referendum by the student body. As a result, a substantial private donation to the College for a building that would benefit students in a non-academic sphere was earmarked for the project. The development of an all-weather hockey pitch at Santry was incorporated into the

project. Terry and Trevor worked tirelessly together on the Sports Complex Planning Committee from 1998 through 2003 and subsequently on the North-East Corner Planning Committee once the decision for the joint construction of the Centre for Research on Adaptive Nanostructures and Nanodevices [CRANN]–Sports Centre Complex was taken. He proudly saw the completion of the College's new Sports Centre in 2007 and its official opening by the Minister for Arts, Sport & Tourism, Séamus Brennan in April 2008. From Terry McAuley's appointment as Director of Sport and Recreation in May 1999, Trevor West guided and facilitated the smooth transition of D.U.C.A.C.'s role in College sport and the transfer of many of D.U.C.A.C.'s erstwhile responsibilities to the Department of Sport.

Trevor West's influence on University sport was not restricted to Trinity College. He foresaw the need in the early 1980's for better co-ordination and organisation of University Sport in Ireland, North and South. Together with fellow University Sports Administrators, he helped to found the Council for University Sports Administrators in Ireland [C.U.S.A.I.], becoming its first Hon. Secretary. Through Trevor, the nascent organisation was provided with office space in House 27 alongside D.U.C.A.C.

From 1977–88 Trevor was Hon. Secretary of the Irish Universities Rugby Union, the representative body for University rugby union in Ireland. In 1978 he organised and accompanied the 25-strong Irish Universities team to New Zealand on its first ever tour which cost £23,000. The Dublin University members of the team were John Robbie (Captain), John Langbroek, Donal Spring, and Michael Gibson and the coach and assistant manager was Roland Meates. The team won six of their nine matches, some of which attracted crowds of up to 40,000 spectators. At Wellington they lost their first match 15–10 against New Zealand Universities, the only non-test side to have beaten the Lions the previous year. In the closing minutes the Irish were awarded a try by the referee but he then changed his mind, a decision which the Irish players accepted in the best sporting manner. The Irish Universities XV turned the tables in the second Universities test at Dunedin 18–4. The final match of the tour was against the New Zealand Colts, the New Zealand National U21 team, at Eden Park, Auckland, in a quagmire of mud, the Irish Universities XV winning 9–6.

Trevor also organised and managed the Irish Universities rugby tour to Korea and Japan in 1987. He was proud of the fact that of the team of 26 players, nine were from Dublin University – Fergus Dunlea, John Sexton, Paul Bell, John Feehan, Patrick Kenny, John Collins, Mark Egan, Richard Murray, and Donal Sheehan, with former DU player Roly Meates again as Assistant Manager and Coach. The first match was against a South Korean Army XV in Soeul, won 15–12, followed by five games in Japan (one loss against Waseda University 16–15), culminating in a test against the full national Japan XV in Tokyo, which the Irish Universities XV won 24–12. Trevor toured subsequently with the Irish Universities teams to South Africa in 1994 and Australia in 1997. He was succeeded in the role of Hon. Secretary of the Irish University Rugby Union by his brother, John West, also a graduate of Trinity College, D.U.F.C. President 1999–2000, and an international rugby union referee.

Trevor retained a deep affinity with his *alma mater* school, Midleton College. He became a Governor of Midleton College in 1974 in succession to his father, Timothy Snr., a role he would fulfil for 36 years. For 24 of those years he was Chairman of the Board of Governors. With the establishment of Midleton College Limited in October 2008, with responsibility for all financial matters relating to the College, he also served as a Director until November 2011. From November 1996 until June 2002 Trevor was a Director of the Sick and Indigent Roomkeepers' Society (Incorporated), a charitable society for all religious persuasions founded in 1790 to relieve poverty in the City of Dublin. He served on the Council of the Royal Irish Academy from 1990 to 1994.

Aside from his mathematical research papers, Trevor West authored several books. In 1986 he wrote a biography of Horace Plunkett, the founder of the Irish Co-operative movement – *Horace Plunkett: Co-operation and Politics – An Irish Biography*. In 1991 he published his history of Trinity's sporting community which traced the development of the University's Clubs and the contributions of Trinity's sportsmen and sportswomen to the codification of sports and to the participation of women in sport – *The Bold Collegians: The Development of Sport in Trinity College, Dublin*. In 1996 he marked the tercentenary of his old school with a short history – *Midleton College: A Tercentenary History*. In 2003 Trevor edited a history of Dublin University Football Club to celebrate its sesquicentenary, the world's oldest senior rugby club in continuous existence – *Dublin University Football Club, 1854 – 2004: 150 years of Trinity Rugby*. In 2006 Trevor related the two hundred years' history in malting barley, primarily for Guinness, of the firm of John H. Bennett at Ballinacurra in Co Cork – *Malting the Barley: John H. Bennett, The Man and His Firm*. John H. Bennett was Trevor's Step-Grandfather. The book brought Trevor back to his family roots and was very much a labour of love.

Aside from *The Bold Collegians*, Trevor West contributed immensely to the rich sporting heritage of Trinity College, the legacy of which he can be justifiably proud. The anecdotal evidence of his sporting *joie de vivre* has become the subject of legend, whether true or not. Throughout his service to D.U.C.A.C. Trevor was generous in time and deed to sport and to sportsmen and sportswomen in College. He took a personal interest in Dublin University sports clubs and encouraged athletes in all sports. Trevor used his good offices to assist sporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds or students who were experiencing financial difficulties. He offered advice, used his network of contacts to assist, and smoothed out ruffled feathers over a pint of Guinness in the Pavilion Bar. He gave financial aid to students anonymously using trusted third parties. Over his 43 years he was the guiding hand of D.U.C.A.C., always steady on the tiller in stormy weather. He developed many life-long friendships with sporting alumni of the College, all of whom share D.U.C.A.C.'s profound sense of loss. Trevor was keen that the end of each sporting year in College should be celebrated with an ecumenical "*Service for the Gift of Sport*". His favourite hymn to be sung by the College Choir on these occasions was "*Non Nobis Domine*", the Olympic Hymn for the Opening ceremony of the XIV Summer Olympiad

in London in 1948, wherein the poem written by Rudyard Kipling in 1934 was set to music by Roger Quilter.

During the celebrations of Trinity's Quatercentenary in 1992 Trevor met Maura Lee when she was conducting interviews for RTE with various people in College on Trinity Life. She interviewed Trevor to gain an insight into Sport in College. They married in 1995 in the College Chapel. They commuted regularly between Midleton and Dublin enjoying each other's company and hosting frequent dinner parties with great enthusiasm.

Trevor West was not to be granted the long healthy years of retirement he richly deserved. He died peacefully on 30 October 2012. He will be sorely missed, not only within D.U.C.A.C. and Trinity College but also in wider Irish sporting circles, for his character, wisdom, spirit, humour, counsel, kindness and cráic. He greatly enjoyed the social aspects of sport, especially those hosted in College. His catch-phrase was "*D.U.C.A.C. always throws the best parties*" on these sorts of occasion. Trevor epitomised the often cited passage in John F. Kennedy's inauguration address as President of the United States of America : "*Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country*". In the many facets of Trevor's life of service to the College and to the community at large, this is equally true – simply replace "Country" with "College" or "Sport" or "Board" or "Committee" or "School" or "Community". The flame of his torch has now been passed to a new generation of Irish men and women, of Trinity graduates and of sportsmen and sportswomen throughout Ireland's Green and Promised Land.

Robert Burns, the Scottish poet laureate, wrote an epitaph on his very good friend William Muir which is appropriate to Timothy Trevor West:

An honest man here lies at rest
As e'er God with his image blest!
The friend of man, the friend of truth;
The friend of age, and guide of youth:
Few hearts like his, with virtue warm'd,
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd:
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;
If there's none, he made the best of this.

Epitaph on William Muir. The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns, No. 37 (1784)

Trevor – Scholar and Senior Fellow of Trinity College Dublin – may you rest in peace!