

Sr. Michele O'Leary, R.S.M: April 11, 1935 – September 10, 2005



Sr. Michele O'Leary, Sister of Mercy and co-founder of the Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh, passed away on September 10th. Michele had fought a courageous three-year battle with cancer. She will be greatly missed by the staff and Board of Directors of the Ireland Institute. Michele's many achievements include an honorary doctorate from the University of Ulster and an appointment to Pennsylvania's Court of Judicial Discipline. Most importantly, Michele was the catalyst for programs allowing thousands of young people in Ireland, north and south, to change their lives. We feel that the best way to remember such a remarkable woman in this space is to share some of the thoughts and condolences offered after Michele passed.

"I am sure that you will take comfort and pride in the knowledge that Sr. Michele was widely recognized for her work, especially with the Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh, where her commitment and dedication to the work of God will always be remembered." – **Mary McAleese, President of Ireland**

"My memory is of a vital, dynamic, energetic and even fiery woman, who, whatever the challenges, and however great the differences of opinion or approach, commanded the respect and won the affection of all who knew her. We shall miss her greatly." – **Joseph Martin, CEO, Western Education and Library Board, Northern Ireland**

"It was with great sadness that we heard of the passing of Sister Michele, on behalf of the board of directors, staff, and past participants we would like to pass on our condolences." – **Mairead Darragh, Tyrone-Downegal Partnership**

"She will always be with us all in the lives she has touched, the legacy she has left and that huge spirit that transcends all barriers earthly and spiritual. It was a privilege of the highest order to have known her." – **Aideen McGinley, Permanent Secretary for Culture, Arts, & Leisure, Northern Ireland**

"We have so many fond memories of Sr. Michele. She was a truly inspirational leader whose kindness and generosity touched so many people here in Ireland and in the Newry area in particular. Her contribution to promoting reconciliation and understanding on the island of Ireland and between Ireland and America was outstanding and will always be remembered by those fortunate enough to meet her. She reached out to young people in a very special way and her instigation of the Rooney Fellowship and the Wider Horizons Programme will never be forgotten. We in the Newry business community will be very grateful for her pioneering role in establishing the Newry/Pittsburgh Partnership." – **Feargal and Anne McCormack, Newry-Pittsburgh Partnership**

"Despite her religious vocation she was a formidable woman who took her place in the boardrooms and at the committee tables where decisions were being made in Pittsburgh and in Irish affairs generally. Sr. Michelle was a friend to all those in Belfast and Northern Ireland who knocked on her door looking for help and advice, and she continued while her health deteriorated to bring groups of interested people twice a year to Belfast in the hope that she could facilitate the creation of employment and prosperity here. She will be sadly missed by all who knew her." -- **South Belfast SDLP MP Alasdair McDonnell (Deputy Leader, SDLP)**



"I don't need to say what a fantastic example she was for those trying to promote *Michele with Walsh Peace Visa Participants* peace and reconciliation in Ireland, north and south. She was truly a step ahead of her time and an inspiration to everyone who knew her and had similar ideals. Personally I have her to thank for getting me my first entrée into television at KDKA back in

1991 and credit her for giving me the break that got me to where I am today. I'm currently producing a daily daytime TV show on Ireland's national broadcaster, RTE, called The Afternoon Show." – **Daniel Crozier, former Leadership Development participant**



"I was deeply saddened to hear about Michele's passing. I know she will be greatly missed not only for the wonderful person she was, but also for the force for good and inspiration that defined her life. She was and will remain an icon in the struggle to save and educate the young people of Ireland. Michele was a professional and compassionate person. I admired her strength and determination. She will be missed by anyone who ever had the privilege to know her" – **Fred Welch, Northrop Grumman Walsh Visa Administrator**

"She was a true friend of Belfast and she was a true friend of everyone that knew her. At times like this you realize the contributions that individuals make and Sister Michele certainly made a very distinctive contribution." – **Eddie Jackson, Economic Development Manager, Belfast City Council**

Anne Burnham offered a lovely and fitting eulogy to Michele at the requiem mass at the Convent of Mercy on September 13th. As Anne stated,

"Michele was fearless in fighting social ills, injustice, racial, religious, or tribal prejudice, and she could harness with her, in whatever crusade she undertook, reluctant politicians, unsuspecting CEOs, and unwary philanthropists. They bent pliant to her requests, persuaded simply by the force of her moral integrity and authority. One simply didn't – couldn't – say no to Michele. Hundreds upon hundreds of young men and women from Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland had their lives transformed through the programs she instituted, the high standards to which she held them, the hope she held out to them, and the boundless compassion she extended to people wounded by terrorism, fear, and loss. The overwhelming majority of the young men and women who went through the Ireland Institute's programs have gone on to jobs, further education, productive lives, and confidence in themselves and their future.

"Above all, she'll be with us when life breaks our hearts, as the Irish know it will, and we need to re-learn, as we do today, to smile, to laugh, and to life our spirits."

Economic Development Center in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland Named in Honor of Michele O'Leary

The Ireland Institute has hosted over 1,500 young people from Ireland and Northern Ireland throughout its 16-year history. Many of these young leaders are participants in the International Fund for Ireland Wider Horizons Program or the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program. They have gone home as leaders in peace and reconciliation, with the skills and ideas necessary to foster economic development at home.



Students at work in the O'Leary New Hope Centre

Over the years hundreds of our participants have come from Enniskillen and County Fermanagh. Through these programs, the Ireland Institute has forged several partnerships with groups from the Enniskillen/Fermanagh region.

The Michele O'Leary New Hope Centre in Enniskillen, County Fermanagh is home to three floors of community, reconciliation, and development-oriented people and organizations.

From community health services to Peace and Reconciliation Training through the New Hope Community College, the Centre is laying the groundwork for an improved future in Fermanagh and throughout Northern Ireland.

If you would like to make a gift to the Centre, your contribution will go toward the New Hope Building Fund. The Enniskillen Community Development Project intends to pay off its building loan within four years. In turn, this will save the organization \$60,000 in interest and allow these monies to be diverted into development work in Fermanagh, including programs for participants coming to Pittsburgh. As Davy Kettles, Director of the Enniskillen Community Development Project, states, "I am sure you will agree with me that your support for the O'Leary New Hope Centre is a fitting tribute to a truly remarkable woman." For more information or to make a gift, please contact the Ireland Institute at 412-394-3900.

Dear Friends,

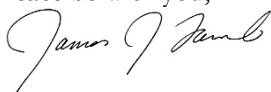
Michele O'Leary, co-founder and President of the Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh, passed away peacefully on Saturday, September 10. She was 70 years old. .

Leaders of business, government, academe, clergy, community development and media, in Pittsburgh and in Ireland, have eloquently detailed the outstanding life and achievements of Michele O'Leary, a one-of-a-kind woman in various testimonials, service awards and proclamations. She made things happen. She confronted social problems and advanced the common good.

Before she passed, Michele wished that the Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh would continue to promote peace and reconciliation. She urged the Board of Directors and staff to pursue that mission.

And so the work continues. Current programs and new opportunities with new partners and old friends press us into action. In her memory, in her spirit, we carry on. And we call on you, our many supporters, who have been so generous with your time and resources, to help. Open your hearts and homes to Ireland's young people. Engage your employers to provide work and training opportunities. Encourage your colleagues to invest in Northern Ireland's bright future. Support our efforts toward a just peace in Ireland.

Peace be with you,



James J. Lamb
Vice President

Thanks to Our Interns

The Institute would like to thank our summer and fall interns: Heidi Baughman, Duquesne University; Emilia Gallagher, Duquesne University; Elizabeth Gingrich, Duquesne University; and Heidi Lynch, Penn State University. We wish you the best in your future endeavors.

New Walsh Visa Participants Arrive this Fall

Please join us in welcoming our newest group of Walsh Visa Participants, Group 17. They will arrive on October 22.

The Institute is once again seeking furniture donations for these new participants. If you have any furniture that you are no longer in need of, please contact the Institute at 412-394-3900.

Thanks to 2005 Host Families

It is because of our Host Families that our Wider Horizons Programs are so successful. We can't thank you enough for opening your homes to young people from Ireland and Northern Ireland. Keep your eyes peeled for information on our 2006 programs. For anyone else who has not yet explored this opportunity, why not sign up to host a young person? It's an opportunity for the Ireland Institute's British and Irish participants to learn about American life. Participating families have the unforgettable experience of learning first-hand about the new Ireland and Northern Ireland. If you are interested, please contact the Ireland Institute at 412-394-3900 or email info@iiofpitt.org.



Don't Forget to Sign-Up for the *Common Ground*!

Subscription to our monthly e-newsletter, the *Common Ground*, has been growing monthly. Don't forget to sign up – every month, you'll get lifestyle features, sports, news, and events from Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the tri-state area. Sign up by sending your email address to us at info@iiofpitt.org.



It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year...

The Ireland Institute will once again host a Christmas Concert. Keep your eye out for more information, delivered straight to your mailbox about this event.

Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh
Regional Enterprise Tower
425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

If you would like to support the important work of the Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh in its mission of reconciliation in Northern Ireland and economic development throughout all of Ireland you can do so by making gifts of time or money. For more information on how to contribute or how to become involved with our work as a volunteer or host family, please call 412-394-3900. Ask to speak to Jim Lamb or visit our website at www.iiofpitt.org.

To designate your United Way gift for the Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh, please mark **4534** on your United Way pledge form.