

TEXT OF THE INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS delivered by: **DR MICHAEL MURPHY**,
President, University College Cork on 8 June, 2007, on the occasion of the conferring of the
Degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, on **LORETTA BRENNAN GLUCKSMAN**

A Leas-Sheansailéir, a mhuintir na hOllscoile agus a dhaoine uaisle,

It is an honour and an immense pleasure to present Loretta Brennan Glucksman for the award of our highest accolade, an Honorary Doctorate in Laws, of the National University of Ireland. It is difficult to imagine a more worthy candidate than Loretta, a true friend of Ireland and of University College Cork.

Member of the Board of the Industrial Development Authority, Board of the Abbey Theatre, Trustee of Trinity College, Member of the Cork Airport Authority Board – you would be forgiven for concluding that I speak of a long-standing member of a cumann of the governing party from West Cork.

However, Allentown, Pennsylvania where Loretta Brennan was born is a long way from Cork. Her grandparents were Irish. Her grandfather was a coalminer who worked at the Arigna coalmines, near Carrick-on-Shannon in County Leitrim.

Loretta's primary education was at Allentown Central Catholic School, but she subsequently moved to St. Josephs in Philadelphia, where she was the only girl amongst 800 boys – good formative experience for the leadership roles she was to adopt in later life!

Following 10 years teaching English at Trenton State School, she joined the Trenton public broadcasting TV station to host a highly successful current affairs programme "The Thursday Report". In the early 80's, she began a new career in Public Relations with the New Jersey Environmental Protection Agency. It was at this time that she met the prominent Wall Street trader, Lewis Glucksman, who arranged her first visit to Ireland.

Having befriended the distinguished UCC alumnus, Dr Ed Walsh, Loretta and Lew developed an extraordinary interest in the success of Irish Universities, generously supporting the University of Limerick, Trinity College, the Royal College of Surgeons, and UCC. Lured to West Cork by opportunities for sailing, they eventually set up home in Cork harbour, a most fortuitous decision for the staff and students of University College Cork. Here they made a typically marvellous contribution to Ireland's heritage in the restoration project, so lovingly carried out by both Lew and Loretta, on East Grove House, their Cork residence. This painstaking project was carried out over many years, restoring the house to its original splendour.

Lew took up the Chair of UCC Foundation Board supporting many important developments in our university, not least the establishment of the magnificent Art Gallery in the Lower Grounds, bearing his name, and where Loretta now serves as chairman of the Board of Directors. Shortlisted for the prestigious Stirling Award for Architecture in 2005, the Glucksman Gallery represents a lasting legacy to the UCC community and indeed to the people of Ireland and beyond.

A further contribution to UCC was the philanthropic gift that allowed us, in collaboration with the Irish Naval Service, to establish the Glucksman Marine Centre at Haulbowline which houses the University's very successful Coastal and Marine Resources Centre.

Loretta continues her promotion of Irish interests in the US. In New York, she established Ireland House which is a repository for Irish Culture and a focus for the learning of the Irish language in America, where our own Professor of Irish History, Joe Lee, lends a helping hand.

She serves on many boards in her native country, several with Irish connections. Of particular significance, is her membership of the Board of Governors of New York University and it is appropriate that, our Government, through the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism, has recently announced funding of scholarships promoting collaboration between UCC and NYU, in recognition of the contribution to Ireland made by Lew and Loretta Glucksman.

Loretta Brennan is probably best known in Ireland as Chairperson of the hugely influential American Ireland Fund, which has raised in excess of 120 million dollars over the last five years. This fund has made an enormous difference to the lives of many people in Ireland, north and south of the border. A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of attending the annual New York dinner of the Fund where she presided over the largest event in its history – 1500 guests, raising over 4 million dollars on the night. The highlight of the evening was her presentation of a cheque for 1 million dollars to Paul Newman to support the Barretstown Castle project for children with cancer – just one of the causes enabled by the Fund. It was equally inspiring to see, at that gala, the esteem in which Loretta Brennan is held by the whole cross-section of Irish America – esteem which is mirrored here in Ireland, and manifested in today's award.

Ireland lacks a system of state honours – for us there is no Legion d'Honneur. However we are pleased to think that the award of an Honorary Doctorate, by the National University, is a suitable token of our gratitude to those to whom we are deeply indebted. Ireland and UCC are truly indebted to Loretta Brennan Glucksman.

Today's conferring is particularly remarkable in that it represents the first occasion, in our 162 years, that we have honoured a husband and wife team, at UCC. Indeed as far as I am aware, the only other comparable case within the NUI system is that of Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien and Dr Máire Mac an tSaoi. Lew and Loretta Glucksman have been a remarkable team. We regret Lew's recent passing, but his memory will live on in Irish universities for many generations. Loretta has earned a special place, not only in our universities and state agencies where she shares her expertise, but throughout all those communities that she has so generously supported over the years. She has, to quote, 'become more Irish than the Irish themselves'.

PRAEHONORABILIS VICE-CANCELLARIE, TOTAQUE UNIVERSITAS,

Praesento vobis hanc meam filiam, quam scio tam moribus quam doctrina habilem et idoneam esse quae admittatur, honoris causa, ad gradum Doctoratus in utroque Jure, tam Civili quam Canonico, idque tibi fide mea testur ac spondeo totique Academiae.