

TEXT OF THE INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS DELIVERED BY **PROFESSOR JIM WARD**, NUI Galway on 25 June, 2010 on the occasion of the conferring of the Degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, on **JOHN KILLEEN**.

A Uachtaráin, a Sheansailéir, a mhuintir na hOllscoile agus a dhaoine uaisle,

On Sunday 25th May last year at 4 am in the morning Galway began to stir. Some never went to bed, others slept on boats, and most roused themselves to witness an extraordinary event which was being watched around the world, from Alicante in Spain, to Qingdao in China, by a TV audience of 1.32 billion, at its peak. Ten Thousand people lined the shores of Galway Bay that May morning to see the Volvo Ocean Race competitors arrive.



The Irish entrant, the Green Dragon, was skippered by Ian Walker, his recollection of the morning and stopover catches the mood:

"When I saw the welcome in Galway, I was speechless, But when I left it was with tears in my eyes. I knew Galway was a great city that loves to party, but never in my wildest dreams did I think Galway and Ireland would bring so much to the Volvo Race."

David O'Brien, Sailing correspondent of the Irish Times writing about the same events summed it up neatly when he wrote:

"'Let's Do it Galway', produced a stunning race festival. Galway brought out the best in the Ocean Race and the race brought out the best in Galway."

The dream of one man whose motivation of a brilliant team, brought this about, and focussed the eyes of millions around the world on Galway.

John Killeen and his team gave Ireland an experience, which will have an economic impact on Galway, not just for the next few years until the race returns, but for decades. Galway is now a familiar name to millions more people, and because it is a recognised name it is more likely that they will visit. It certainly makes the job of marketing Galway as a destination, easier for our Tourist Board.

According to research carried out (on behalf of the Volvo Ocean Race) by the Sports Business Group at Deloitte, 99% of international visitors would recommend Galway as a holiday destination.

The immediate economic impact on Galway and Ireland last year was enormous:

€55m was injected to the local economy,
650,000 people visited the race village,
1.3B watched on TV,
234m listened to the Radio commentary,
16,000 children joined in through the schools programme,
10,000 children visited the race village.

By way of comparison;

Projections for the Ryder Cup in Wales this year are for crowds of 120 – 200K and €43m of economic impact.

This event probably represents John Killeen's most significant and long standing impact on Galway. However, it is of course not the only one.

John has been a business leader for 25 years. As CEO of Cold Chon he has grown the company to be a world-leading manufacturer of emulsifier chemicals and additives. Under the Chemoran Brand they are now number three in their sector in the world, with exports to four continents. Chemoran is a world leader in R&D, in which I might add the University has also played a role. The company was one of the first to establish a zero emission plant and has an enviable track record in achieving quality and safety standards, resulting in numerous international awards.

But John was first of all an engineer, having qualified as a Civil Engineer in UCD, later completing his Masters degree in Industrial Engineering at this University. He has served and been honoured by his profession. He was President of the Institution of Engineers in Ireland (now Engineers Ireland) in 1995. He is a fellow of the Institute of Civil Engineers in London, the Institution of Engineers of Ireland and the Academy of Engineers of Ireland (an all-Ireland engineering body), of which he was founding President in 1997.

John Killeen has also been a leader in his community. He chairs the Vision Group, established 5 years ago to redevelop the Galway docklands. Working with the Galway Harbour Company, Galway City Council, Fáilte Ireland West, and others the Vision Group are planning a future of the docks, which will see its transformation to a marina and research centre. Last week it was announced that Cold Chon will provide a new

watersports centre for the city which will house sea scouts, Claddagh Hooker enthusiasts, divers and kayakers, among others. Cold Chon has previously supported the development of Pearse Stadium, and Galwegians Rugby Club.

On May 29th last John became a Freeman of Galway in recognition of contribution to his adopted City.

Declan McDonnell, Mayor of Galway at the time John received this honour, quoted as follows from the Galway Weekly Advertiser of 168 years ago in his address.

"These Honorary distinctions are but of dust weighted in the balance when compared with the sterling talent and intrinsic merit of this excellent individual"

That sentence was written about Alexander Nimmo, another engineer, and after whom John named his own boat. As the Mayor said on that occasion these words could today, be as easily said about John Killeen.

John Quinn Adams, 6th President of the US once said;

"If your actions, inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader".

Today, we in the University Community are pleased to honour a true leader who has inspired us, to dream, to learn and to do more and I am very pleased to present John Killeen for an Honorary Doctor of Laws.

PRAEHONORABILIS CANCELLARIE, TOTAQUE UNIVERSITAS:

Praesento vobis, hunc meum filium quem scio tam moribus quam doctrina habilem et idoneum esse qui admittantur, honoris causa, ad gradum Doctoratus in utroque Jure, tam Civili quam Canonico, idque tibi fide mea testor ac spondeo totique Academiae.