

TEXT OF THE INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS DELIVERED BY:

**PROFESSOR PATRICK FITZPATRICK**, Head of the College of Science, Engineering & Food Science, University College Cork on 3 June 2011, in University College Cork, on the occasion of the conferring of the Degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, on **COMMODORE FRANK LYNCH**

A Sheansaileir agus a mhuintir uilig na hOllscoile, To tell the story about why University College Cork is conferring an Honorary Doctorate in Laws on Commodore Frank Lynch, it is almost impossible to avoid nautical puns. I could tell you that in the 1970s the Navy was in the doldrums, that Frank's extraordinary talent bubbled to the surface, so that he ended up taking the helm, and that in the face of some fairly stiff head-winds he charted a new and ambitious course for the Naval Service, during which he brought people on board, and effected a sea-change.

But, in fact, all that is precisely true: in the early 1970s the Navy didn't actually have any ships! Frank did rise through the ranks to the top position of Flag Office Commanding, from which he led an inclusive, consultative process of review of the entire Naval Service that resulted in hugely significant and lasting organisational change.

Frank is a native of Co. Galway. He joined the Navy in 1968 and after training in the Naval Service and at Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, he qualified as an Operations Officer. He completed the Command and Staff course in the Military College at the Curragh during 1984-85, graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Information Technology from Dublin City University in 1994, and was awarded an MSc in Operations Management by the same university in 2002.

By the time Frank retired in December 2010 he had completed 42 years' service. In 1973, he was one of the two Boarding Officers on the minesweeper *Long Éireannach Fola* involved in the seizure of the vessel *Claudia*, which attempted to land a cargo of arms and ammunition from Libya at Helvick Head near Dungarvan in Co. Waterford. He took command of *LÉ Fola* in 1977 at the age of 27, the youngest officer ever appointed to a sea command. He was commander of the patrol vessels *LÉ Emer* from 1982 to 1984 and *LÉ Eithne* from 1993 to 1995. Rising through the ranks he was appointed Flag Officer Commanding the Naval Service in 2002, in which position he served until retirement. From April 1997 until May 1998, Frank served with UN Interim Forces in Lebanon as Camp Commandant at UNIFIL HQ in Naqoura.

As many here will know, there are very close connections between the Irish and Argentinean Naval Services. William Brown, a native of Foxford, Co. Mayo, went to Argentina in the early 1800s, where he established and became the first admiral of Argentina's maritime forces. In 2006 Frank was honoured with the award of the Argentinean Order of Naval Merit in the degree of Admiral Brown Grand Cross.

Frank's career spans a period of enormous advances in equipment and technology,

epitomised perhaps by the change from rowing boats to rigid inflatables, and from Morse Code to satellite communications, and it was he, as Commodore, who oversaw the appointment of the first female commanding officer at sea, Lieutenant Commander Roberta O'Brien, who took the helm of the *LÉ Aisling* in 2008.

Frank worked closely with Cork Institute of Technology to bring about the establishment of the National Maritime College of Ireland in Ringaskiddy, which opened its doors in 2004. His connection with UCC goes back a couple of years earlier to when he brought our Coastal and Marine Resources Centre onto the Naval Base at Haulbowline Island, a move which was made possible by Frank's open-minded attitude, and by funding from Lew Glucksman. Lew had served with the US Navy and developed a rapport with Frank, and it was that relationship which provided the key to the establishment of the CMRC facility.

More recently, Frank has been instrumental in facilitating the development of the Maritime and Energy Research Campus and Commercial Cluster, or MERC3, which is a tripartite project between the Naval Service, the Cork Institute of Technology and UCC. This is a very exciting development that will significantly enhance our capacity for research on renewable energy sources, especially ocean energy, as well as providing a platform for industry-led research on marine logistics, maritime security, maritime ICT, marine recreation and many other associated fields.

However, apart from all these initiatives, the main contribution that Frank made during his career with the Irish Naval Service, and what will no doubt be his enduring legacy, is the strategic revolution that he brought about in its organisational structure. In 1991, he was appointed by the Minister of Defence to a review group, and had a significant influence in the thrust of the resulting White Paper delivered in 2001. The new direction clearly envisaged in that document was that the Naval Service should diversify its sphere of influence. Frank led the way in establishing Service Level Agreements with a range of government agencies – the Marine Institute, An Garda Síochana, the Department of Fisheries, and the Higher Education sector. These external relationships have been very influential in the development of the Naval Service.

But Frank was equally concerned to bring about internal reform. As Flag Officer Commanding from 2002 onwards he challenged the perceived wisdom among the men and women who staffed the Naval Service. He encouraged them to think of their 20-year careers in the Navy as the first part of their lifetime careers and to plan accordingly. He was an enthusiastic advocate of 'lifelong learning', 'continuing professional development', and 'recognition of prior learning', almost before those phrases became common currency in the third-level institutions. He introduced modern management techniques and modern IT structures and established the Naval Service as what he himself refers to as a 'learning organisation'. The National Maritime College now awards HETAC-accredited BA degrees in leadership, management and naval studies, BScs in Nautical Science, BEng degrees in Marine Engineering and plans to introduce Masters programmes for senior officers.

Frank's thinking clearly evolved over the years as he became more and more immersed in the challenges of leading a large and complex organisation. He adopted and implemented Kaplan and Norton's 'balanced scorecard' approach to strategic planning, and indeed went further by modifying their approach, through the lens of his own personal experience in management of people, to create what he calls a '*personal balanced scorecard*'. This is a career development tool by which individuals can set career and life goals and against which they can periodically take stock. One of his ambitions in retirement is to develop these ideas more fully into a concrete system that he hopes to bring to fruition in a published form.

Frank is married to Janette whom he met while studying in Liverpool University in 1969. They have a son Kristian, and a daughter Nikki and son-in-law Matthew, who are with us here today. In retirement, he will pursue his passion for swimming and as a swimming coach, and of course he will be working on his golf handicap. He will also be playing the guitar, which he took up only two years ago – demonstrating once again his commitment to lifelong learning! But I suspect that many of these occupations will take second place to playing the role of doting grandfather to Nikki and Matthew's son, Sam. With great affection, we wish Frank well in all he does.

Throughout his career Commodore Frank Lynch displayed personal qualities of integrity, courage, perseverance, and most of all selflessness. His creativity and leadership brought about sweeping, systemic transformation in the Irish Naval Service, which will be his legacy into the future. For these reasons we recognise Commodore Lynch today by the award of an Honorary Doctorate in Laws.

*Praehonorabilis cancellarie, totaque universitas:*

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