

OLLSCOIL na hÉIREANN

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND

TEXT OF THE INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS DELIVERED BY:

PROFESSOR MARGARET MacCURTAIN, on 2 December 2015 in the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, on the occasion of the conferring of the Degree of Literature, *honoris causa*, on **PROFESSOR MARY DALY**

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

Mary Elizabeth Daly (nee Crowley) grew up in Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan, and is a past pupil of St. Louis Convent. She showed early brilliance when she graduated with a double-first in history and economics from UCD in 1969 and was awarded an NUI Travelling Studentship in history. This took her to Oxford where she pursued doctoral studies at Nuffield College. In 1973 she was appointed as assistant lecturer in modern Irish history at UCD, going on to become one of Ireland's most prominent senior historians.

Mary's research interests focus on nineteenth and twentieth century Ireland, especially socio-economic history. She has published 10 sole-authored books, and many scholarly articles. Over the course of her distinguished career, she has researched widely and published prolifically, notably: *Dublin, the Deposed*

Capital: A Social and Economic History, 1860-1914 (1984); *Women and Work in Ireland* (1997); *The Slow Failure: Population Decline and Independent Ireland, 1920-1973* (2006); and, with Theo Hoppen, *Gladstone: Ireland and Beyond* (2011). Her 2006 book, *The Slow Failure. Population decline and independent Ireland, 1920-1973* (University of Wisconsin), was a Choice Outstanding Academic Book. Spring 2016 sees the publication by Cambridge University Press of *Sixties Ireland: Transforming economy, society and the state, 1957-73*.

Mary retired from UCD as full professor in 2014 having played a very active role in the life of the University where she served for seven years as Principal of UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies. She is now an emeritus professor of history at UCD. Professor Daly is a member of the NUI Publications Committee and has made a significant contribution to NUI in various capacities. In 2008 she gave the NUI Centennial O'Donnell Lecture published later as *The Irish State and the Diaspora*.

From 2000 to 2004 Mary was Secretary of the Royal Irish Academy and vice-chair of the Academy's Working Group on Higher Education. Her energetic and innovative strategies as secretary of RIA brought the work of the Academy to a wider audience who came to lectures, conferences and book launches

with a sense of ownership. Professor Daly was involved in the commemoration of the sesquicentenary of the great famine 1995-97, and with Dr Margaret O'Callaghan she directed a research project on the Golden Jubilee of the 1916 Rising, resulting in the publication of a major edited work: 1916 in 1966: commemorating the Easter Rising (2007).

In 2014, Mary was elected as the first female President of the Royal Irish Academy in its 229-year history.

Mary Daly has served in many public roles. She has been a member of the Higher Education Authority, the Irish Manuscripts Commission, and the National Archives Advisory Council. In February 2015 she was appointed as a member of the Commission of Inquiry into Mother and Baby Homes. Mary is a member of the government's Expert Advisory Group on Commemorations. She has also held visiting positions at Harvard and Boston College. She has served on the National Archives Advisory Council and the Irish Manuscripts Commission.

Her dedication to public service and to requests from government i.e. her important contribution to an understanding of commemoration, the Great Famine and more recently, 1916 Rebellion.

Her contribution to 20thc. Irish economic history has been of major importance and in particular she has given fresh scrutiny to social aspects and consequences of Irish economy.

Her family life enriches her distinguished academic career. She has always given great support to her students, particularly encouraging them to publish their doctoral theses. Her personal life is remarkable for her kindness, her unobtrusive hospital visits, her hospitality. For her achievements as a historian, for her contribution to scholarship and the life of the university, for her exceptional contribution to the Irish public life as well as for her great personal qualities, Professor Mary Elizabeth is most worthy of the award of the degree of Doctor of Literature and I have great pleasure Chancellor in presenting her for this degree.

PRAEHONORABILIS 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 Litteris, idque tibi fide mea testor ac spondeo, totique Academiae.

