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ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY WAY



AUTUMN 2012/SPRING 2013 NORRIS NEWS SHEET

Seasonal Greetings from Trinity

Dear Graduate,

It's that time of year again and I'm contacting you to fill you in not just on my activities for the last twelve months but also to touch on those of our alma mater Trinity College, a.k.a. the College of the Holy and Undivided Trinity!

As you are no doubt aware 2011 was a rather hectic time for me with both the Seanad and the Presidential elections. While I was successful in the Seanad election, thanks to many of you who gave me your number 1 vote, the Presidential race was another matter! My memories of that occasion have been outlined in my recent autobiography 'A Kick Against the Pricks', (the biblical and classical pedigree of the title will I am sure be familiar to graduates), so therefore I will not be dwelling on them in this missive.

With very best wishes to you and those close to you for the forthcoming festive season.

David Norris

December 2012



Father of the House



It was a great honour on the 25th of May 2011 to be named Father of the House following the Seanad election. This is a title which is conferred upon the longest serving member of the Seanad. The Father of the House has the privilege of opening the proceedings of the new session in Seanad Eireann with a speech, and then calling for nominations to the various official positions such as Cathaoirleach, Leader of the House etc and it gave me great pride and pleasure to accept this titular role. I have always believed that being called to serve one's country in public life is the highest accolade for a citizen and I have tried to live up to this ideal to the best of my abilities over the last quarter of a century.

However during my speech I could not ignore the fact that according to Taoiseach Enda Kenny there will be a Referendum on the future of the Senate. This is a critical time for the future of democracy in this country and it is in my view certainly not an appropriate juncture to lop off one entire branch of the legislature and one in which the graduate representatives such as Noel Browne, Mary

Robinson, Catherine McGuinness and Owen Sheehy Skeffington have played such a significant role. No one can deny that the venal actions of some politicians have brought the whole profession of politics into disrepute but we as politicians must do all we can to reform the Oireachtas, both Dail and Seanad, in order to prevent this from recurring. We now have a challenge to demonstrate to Government and people alike that a reformed Seanad, in particular, will be a valuable part of the legislative arm of the State. At the end of the day Seanad Eireann like all the great institutions of our Republic, belongs not to the parties but to the people of Ireland. If you are interested in what I have to say on the issue see my opinion piece in the Irish Times of the 7th of May 2009 and the various debates on Seanad reform which have been held in the Oireachtas at www.oireachtas.ie



Senator David Norris

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Green Week in Trinity College Dublin – February 2012



Launching Green Week February 2012.

I was happy and honoured to launch the College's Green Week in February of this year. I have been doing this for a number of years and each year I continue to be impressed by the progress our University has made in the fight against pollution and in the increases we have made in the area of sustainability.

Provost Patrick Prendergast when speaking about the green aims of the College stated that Trinity has recently applied for Green Campus status and "if we are successful, it will see Trinity become the first university in Dublin to 'fly the Green Flag' and be seen to 'practice what it preaches' in ensuring a sustainable environment for all".

To date College has achieved 7.2% of a reduction in energy use in 8 buildings, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 462 tonnes at a cost saving of almost €100,000 per annum. This is a great achievement of which we can all be proud.

The Dublin Living Awards are all about recognising and celebrating Dublin's best businesses, services, places and people and I was very proud to have been voted as Dubliner of the Year in 2011 especially considering the opposition i.e Brian O'Driscoll, Katie Taylor et al. It was very reassuring in the midst of political turbulence to learn that I still had such a place in the heart of my fellow Dubliners.



With fellow Trinity Alumni from the Oireachtas and Provost Patrick Prendergast.

The Role of the Foreign Affairs Committee:

It was I together with our newly elected President Michael D. Higgins who established the first Foreign Affairs Committee in Leinster House some twenty years ago. I am fortunate enough also to have the unique distinction of being the only person to have been a member without a break since the committee's inception. This committee has been working extremely hard for many years and has been successful in highlighting not just human and civil rights abuses in many countries but the plight of specific individuals who are in dire need. For example within the last few weeks my attention was brought to the case of Nasrin Sotoudeh a prominent human rights Attorney currently serving six years in Evin Prison in Tehran. The case of Ms. Sotoudeh is now being looked into by our committee and I sincerely hope that by showing such interest in her case we can make a difference. I have been concerned for some time that since the sad economic plight of our country has been revealed and the department has been renamed the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade there could be a rebalancing to the detriment of human rights and that economic values alone would prevail. It is important to have a strong voice on the committee to address this.



The Democratic Party Leader of the United States House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi was welcomed to College by Senator David Norris on the 13th of March 2012 and presented with a Gold Medal as Honorary Patronage by The University Philosophical Society for her excellent performance as a public representative in the US and outstanding contribution to politics.

This is the wording of a motion I put down on the order paper of the Seanad in October of this year which has received cross party support and which the Leader of the Seanad has informed me will be discussed and passed by the house.

Motion:

- "That this House condemns sexual violence in conflict and calls on the government to*
- (a) Affirm Ireland's commitment to implement United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security and Ireland's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.*
 - (b) Play a leadership role in international efforts to end sexual violence and bring about accountability and support survivors of sexual violence in conflict through Irish diplomacy and development assistance, and;*
 - (c) Support the efforts of organizations to draw attention to, and denounce, sexual violence."*



Job Shadow Initiative

It was a pleasure on the 25th of April this year to participate in the Job Shadow Initiative.

Hundreds of individuals with disabilities throughout Ireland were given a unique opportunity to shadow a workplace mentor for a day which was organised by the Irish Association of Supported Employment (IASE) a national organisation promoting employment rights and access to work and training for all people with a disability here in Ireland.

This initiative is now in its fifth year and to date hundreds of employers have sponsored a person with a disability to work with them or in their company.

I thoroughly enjoyed the experience as I hope and believe did my shadow!



At home with candidate Dean at the start of Job Shadow Day.

Visiting CBS Carrick-on-Suir



Senator David Norris visited the CBS Secondary School in Carrick-on-Suir on Monday 12th March to talk to senior students at the invite of 6th year student Evan Ryan with the support of Mr. Casey and his fellow colleagues on the Student Consultative Council. Pictured front l-r: Mr. Billy O'Farrell, Principal, Cllr. Patsy Fitzgerald Mayor of Carrick-on-Suir, Senator David Norris, Senator Denis Landy (former pupil at CBS) and teacher Majella Gleeson. Back l-r: members of the 'Student Consultative Council', Jamie Torpey, Claran Mansfield, Brian O'Loughlin, David Dunne, Evan Ryan and Alex Lonergan.

On the 12th of March at the invitation of Evan Ryan, Mr. Casey and his colleagues on the Student Consultative Council, I was delighted to visit the CBS in Carrick-on-Suir, South Tipperary. It was good to see young people engaged and interested in politics and the future of this country. The visit left me with a renewed sense of hope for our future.

Privacy Bill – Minister to Review Press Standard Mechanisms Next Year

On the 22nd of March this year I introduced a bill entitled The Privacy Bill 2012. My interaction with members of the public who have been adversely affected by the intrusion of the media as well as my experiences during the recent Presidential election are among factors which have led me to introduce this Bill. I believe that with the support of my colleagues we can introduce legislation which will secure the privacy and protect the rights of people who through no fault of their own come under the scrutiny of the media and are subsequently subjected to unfair and inaccurate comment. In line with this I recently submitted a paper at the request of the Leveson Inquiry in London presenting my views on how we can protect the rights of the public and improve the role of the media here in Ireland.



Motion on the Children's Rights Referendum:

The Supreme Court Judgement in the matter of the Children's Rights Referendum holding that the Government had acted illegally by not fully observing the McKenna Principles came as a shock to the authorities. I used a little known mechanism of the Senate under Standing Order 30 and was successful in getting a full emergency debate within a few hours of its delivery, something attempted without success in the Dail. This was a classic demonstration of the significant value of the Senate and afforded the Minister and members of the house the first significant opportunity to comment and was reported widely on radio and tv.

SENATOR DAVID NORRIS



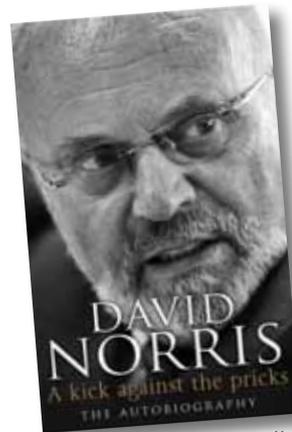
Visiting Alice Leahy in Trust, March 2011.



At the launch of the Samaritans' Annual Impact Report in Buswells Hotel, December 2011. This photo has been kindly supplied by Conor O'Mearáin.



ARAN. Animal Rights Campaign.



I was pleased at the response of some distinguished writers to my autobiography especially Colm Toibín in the Irish Times on the 27th of October 2012, Eamonn Delaney in the Independent on the 13th October and on Totally Dublin.ie on the 2nd of November 2012.

"A Kick...." has been nominated for the Irish Book of the Year in the Non Fiction Category. www.irishbookawards.ie