

**THE PEOPLE WHO INSPIRED:****GENE KERRIGAN**

IN normal times, I might write of the inspirational qualities of William Trevor's short stories, Christy Moore's singing, Dennis O'Driscoll's poetry, Dara O Briain's free-roving wit or Kevin Doyle's old-fashioned sportsmanship. In these fraught, historic times, I find myself seeking hope in the example of individuals who respond to major social issues and/or personal adversity with courage, fresh ideas and resilience.

**JUDGE PETER KELLY**

He affirms that justice is not blind, but equal

I'M inspired by equality before the law. In November 1997, Judge Peter Kelly told Liam Carroll of Zoe Developments: "The workers on whose sweat you make your money are treated with contempt — and so are the laws." A young man had been killed in an accident on a Zoe site. Kelly threatened to close Zoe down if the safety laws were broken again. It worked. Those who can afford armies of lawyers have always received every break the law could give them. In the High Court, Kelly tried to give equal protection to vulnerable and disturbed children neglected by the State, sometimes to the point of suicide. That resulted in clashes with government ministers. Now, in the Commercial Court, Kelly applies the law rigorously amid the fallout from the economic collapse. Those who know the law business say that Kelly is frowned upon from above, instead of being cherished as a servant of the public. Calmly, undeterred, he continues to affirm the necessity of justice that is not blind but is equal.

**PROFESSOR KATHLEEN LYNCH**

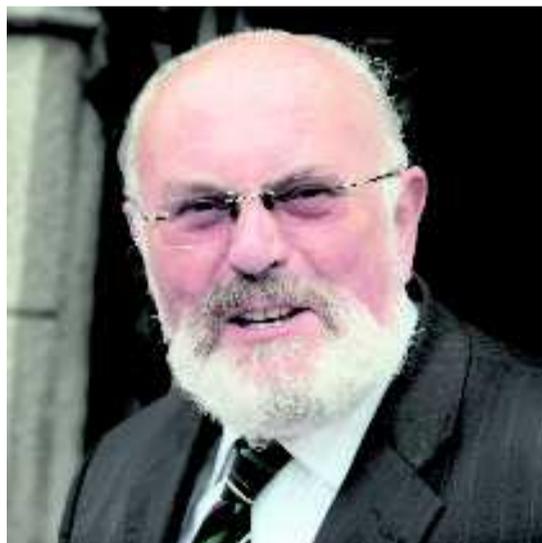
Academic who questions growing gulf in society



I'M inspired by people with fresh ideas. In recent years, political and business leaders have spoken proudly of the need for greater inequality as an engine of growth. This odd theory was used to justify sensational salaries and excessive expenses for bankers, politicians and top executives in both the private and public sectors. Exuberance amid the new-found wealth led to a shrinking sense of inquiry, the benefit of questioning was largely lost. And that contributed to the structural decay that caused the crash. In this context, the work of Professor Kathleen Lynch of UCD offers a thoughtful response to a severe problem. Lynch studies equality not because it's fair or moral, but because research conclusively shows that the more equal a society is, the more stable it is, and the more efficient. Equality isn't an aspiration, it's a valuable tool. One we'll need in the days to come.

**DAVID NORRIS**

The stubborn moral and physical courage to lead fight for gay rights



I'M inspired by stubborn courage. Forty years ago, when he sought help for depression, David Norris was advised to emigrate. He would feel much better, he was told, if he went to a country where there was greater tolerance of homosexuality. Such was the stern, implacable Ireland of the day. Norris stayed put, and for decades calmly campaigned to change both the law and attitudes. He wasn't seeking tolerance for gays, he was demanding equal treatment as a citizen. He was rejected by the High Court and the Supreme Court, until eventually the Irish courts were trumped by Europe. Norris was part of the burgeoning gay rights movement and simultaneously he was apart from it, ploughing his legal furrow — prominent and vocal, cheerful and relentless. It's easy — from this less harsh Ireland — to underestimate the moral and physical courage it took to do what Norris did.

**EAMONN McCANN**

Clear-thinking way of seeing subjects amid others' unthinking acceptance

I'M inspired by clarity. Back in the Seventies, journalism was blossoming. Joe Joyce and Don Buckley were turning over rocks, Nell McCafferty was haunting the judiciary on a daily basis, Vincent Browne seemed to be starting a new magazine every second year. For me, in those groundbreaking days of the early *Sunday World*, one journalist stood out — and, all this time later, still stands out — as a uniquely talented writer and analyst. In times of great emotionalism, his radical take on the Northern conflict followed a clear line between the me-too attractions of the mainstream and the smothering embrace of republicanism. Today, in *Hot Press*, the *Derry Journal* and the *Belfast Telegraph*, Eamonn McCann can take a subject that's been over-chewed by other writers, wittily deconstruct it and show it anew. It remains a rare talent, amid so much scarily negative repetition of received wisdoms.

**ANDREW MADDEN**

Articulate survivor of clerical abuse who can point out church's continued failings



I'M inspired by constructive anger. After all that was done and denied and covered up, a simple silence born of remorse would be appropriate for both the Irish hierarchy and the Vatican. When the men in black emerge to reinterpret the past and reconfigure the present, the uncompromising, cool, articulate responses of abuse survivor Andrew Madden are an invaluable asset.