

WHO IS THE GREATEST?

We launch the search for Limerick's all time greatest person - See p22-23

The Leader

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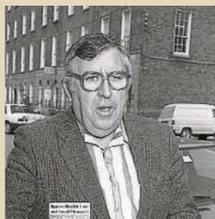


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THE SEARCH FOR LIMERICK'S ALL-TIME GREATEST PERSON

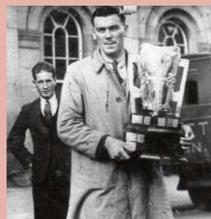


Jim Kemmy

LIMERICK has always been the home of high-profile politicians - but there are few to rival Jim Kemmy.

A Limerick East TD, mayor, respected campaigner and trade unionist, he was a socialist at the time when it was neither popular nor indeed safe. During his political career - which was cut short by cancer in 1997 - his views and support for minority causes attracted the ire of many, including the Bishop of Limerick Jeremiah Newman.

A Garryowen man, he was a passionate fighter for the disadvantaged. Indeed, in 1982, he brought down the government over the imposition of a tax on children's shoes and the impact it would have on hard-pressed parents. He was also an academic, starting the Old Limerick Journal in 1989 with Kevin Hannan, Tony Browne and Tom Donovan.



Mick Mackey

When Ahane GAA Club revealed the date for their All-Ireland heroes' homecoming celebrations there was one photo everybody couldn't wait to see - Mick Mackey being reunited with the Liam MacCarthy cup.

Dan and Tom Morrissey duly obliged and posed with his statue in Castleconnell.

Arguably the greatest hurler the game ever produced, Mick Mackey won three All-Ireland, five Munster and five National Hurling League medals.

At club level, Ahane swept all before them. The combination of his talent on the pitch and his good looks off it meant Mick Mackey became hurling's first superstar.

And to this day he remains a legend of the game.



JP McManus

A towering figure in the world of horse racing, businessman and philanthropist JP McManus is Limerick's richest person.

The 'Sundance Kid' used to describe himself as a gambler. However, his vast business portfolio stretches into high finance, stock exchange and leisure ventures. The self-made billionaire mixes with some of the world's best-known and richest people, but has never forgotten his roots. The JP McManus Charitable Foundation has raised millions of euro for good causes, while he has also funded scholarships for hundreds of students. The 67-year-old South Liberties clubman is the primary sponsor of Limerick GAA, Team Limerick Clean Up and Limerick Going for Gold. He owns the five-star Adare Manor Hotel and Golf Resort.



Paul O'Connell

Wherever you are in the world, if you mention you are from Ireland and indeed from Limerick, sports fans will immediately mention the name Paul O'Connell.

The Young Munster man pulled on the red jersey of Munster on 218 occasions winning two Heineken Cups, three Pro14 titles and one Celtic Cup trophy. Capped 108 times by his country, O'Connell won three Six Nations, four triple crowns and one Grand Slam. He also became the first Limerick man to captain the British and Irish Lions, when he led the famous side on their 2009 tour of South Africa.

Following a stellar playing career O'Connell now coaches at Stade Francais in Europe, while also acting as an ambassador for Limerick the world over and is involved in the development of an international rugby museum in his city.



Blindboy Boatclub

Best-selling author, satirist, writer for TV, mental health campaigner and plastic bag wearing rapper - Blindboy is a man of many talents.

The Rubberbandit first came to prominence in the furore that greeted smash hit single Horse Outside, defending the song to an outgunned Joe Duffy live on radio. A social media native who utilises Twitter with craft and ease, Blindboy graduated with an MA in Social Practice and the Creative Environment from LIT in 2015.

An impassioned speech on the Late Late Show about a "crisis" of mental health among his generation brought him further to public consciousness, but it is the Bandits' classic tunes - Bag of Glue, Dad's Best Friend and Song for Willie O'Dea among them - that made him a lyrical hero to many.



Vicky Phelan

Vicky Phelan has taken the world by storm since her explosive revelations last April about the cervical check scandal.

Rather than go away quietly with a settlement for the mistaken cancer diagnosis that could possibly end up costing her life, Annacotty woman Vicky chose to go public to help other women affected by the scandal and forestall such a terrible outcome again.

While undergoing demanding treatment for her ongoing condition she has fearlessly used her voice for the betterment of women's health and of Irish life - chiefly through her fight for accountability in the public arena and state bodies.

She has evolved into that which politicians fear the most - an articulate, passionate campaigner with nothing to lose.



Richard Harris

Arguably one of Limerick's most famous ever sons, Richard Harris appeared in 77 films and was a genuine "movie star", famed for his hell-raising ways.

A love for rugby would shape his life, memorably supporting his beloved Munster at the team's first Heineken Cup final in Twickenham in 2000, but he was prolific on the silver screen, debuting in Shake Hands with the Devil in 1959. His breakthrough role was in the 1963 film This Sporting Life, which earned him an Oscar nomination. A star turn in The Field earned him another Oscar nod, while memorable roles in Patriot Games, Unforgiven and Gladiator ensured a glorious legacy. Toward the end of his life, his role as Dumbledore in Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone brought him a new legion of fans. He died in 2002.



Ruth Negga

Described as a "rare and powerful talent" Limerick-raised actress Ruth Negga is now putting Ireland on the map in her new role as a cultural ambassador.

Following her breakout role in Breakfast at Pluto, Ruth went on to star in Love/Hate, Ophelia at the National Theatre and E4 series the Misfits. In 2017, she received a Golden Globe and Oscar nomination for her work in Jeff Nichols' film Loving. Raised in Dooradoyle, Ruth was born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where she lived until she was four. She went to national school in Roxborough, and later spent part of her secondary school at Scoil Carmel on O'Connell Avenue, before completing her drama studies at Trinity College Dublin. Ruth has two movies set for release in 2019 - Ad Astra, starring Brad Pitt, and Passing, directed by Rebecca Hall.

The shortlist for Limerick's All Time Great

THE shortlist of names for the search to find Limerick's All Time Great has been drawn up and the competition will now begin in earnest.

Sixteen people have been selected from hundreds of nominations and now the fun really begins! The Leader will shortly launch a series of online polls pitting our nominees head-to-head at quarter-final, semi-final and eventually, final stage over the coming weeks.

A draw will take place this Friday, the results of which will be posted in video online. Then, the polls will ask you, the reader, to determine who

is Limerick's All Time Great.

"As you can see, a fantastically varied list of 16 names has been assembled, from business, charity, sport, entertainment, politics and historical - "generations of people who have contributed greatly to local life in this county and this recognises their work," explained Eugene Phelan, editor of The Leader.

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LIMERICK LEADER all time greats

HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE GREATEST IN LIMERICK



Dolores O'Riordan

REARED in a modest family home in the townland of Ballybricken, Dolores O'Riordan went on to become the Limerick person who would have the single biggest impact across the globe.

The former student of the city's Model school and Laurel Hill Coláiste sold over 40 million records worldwide with her band The Cranberries. Dolores' appeal was her unique, haunting voice coupled with her song writing talent and her ability to deliver music in an authentic fashion. The music world was left reeling then on January 15, 2018 from the news of the accidental death of the 46-year-old mother-of-three due to intoxication from alcohol. The Cranberries biggest tracks, Dreams and Zombie, went on to be the soundtrack for the Limerick hurlers' All-Ireland victory in 2018.



Andy Lee

DESCRIBED by sports guru Donald McRae as "one of the most universally beloved fighters in the game", retired Limerick boxer Andy Lee is among Ireland's most celebrated athletes in living memory.

Born in London, Lee moved to Daly's Cross, Castleconnell in his early teens where he resided throughout the glory days of his amateur career. After being Ireland's sole boxing contender in Athens 2004 Olympics, Andy was later headhunted by the world's most decorated coach Emanuel Steward, departing to Detroit to commence his trail to the top of the game. And in December 2014, Lee claimed the WBO middleweight world title. On February 20, 2018, he announced his retirement, leaving a lasting legacy on boxing in Limerick and Ireland.



Celia Holman Lee

HAVING started out as a model at the age of 15 while still at school, after being approached while working as a shop assistant, Celia Holman Lee founded her model agency at the age of 22.

And, after over half a century in the fashion business, her brand and appeal are stronger than ever. Celia, who grew up on Carey's Road in the city and now resides in Ballysheedy, has won countless awards including Most Stylish Ever at the VIP Style Awards last year. The grandmother, who is referred to as Limerick's Style Queen, regularly rocks the red carpet at top national events, and rarely, if ever, puts a foot wrong in term of style. While she frequently rubs shoulders with top showbiz personalities, the Limerick woman has always remained true to her roots.



Anthony Foley

ANTHONY Foley left an indelible mark on Limerick, Munster and Ireland rugby, from his time as a player and coach.

Munster Rugby coach Anthony Foley died suddenly, aged 42, at the province's team hotel in Paris in October 2016 on the morning of their Champions Cup clash with Racing 92. News of Foley's death was met with a sense of shock and disbelief throughout the country. He took over as Munster head coach in July 2014. As a player, Shannon clubman Foley won 62 caps for Ireland - three of them as captain. He played in the World Cups of '95 and 2003, and his final Ireland appearance was against Wales in the 2005 Six Nations. He captained Munster to their first Heineken Cup triumph in 2006.

He played over 200 times for his province.