



Brian Conlon Tribute Night

A night to remember a Ne

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THERE were lots of laughs, and plenty of tears. Fascinating tales were told and heart-breaking stories recalled.

Over 500 people packed into the Canal Court Hotel to remember Brian Conlon, travelling from as far as New York, Singapore and Canada.

Many people are familiar with the Newry man's incredible business career, but the evening of celebration wasn't just about the meteoric rise and success of First Derivatives.

It was about Brian the school friend, the brother, the son, the husband...the dad.

The talented GAA star, the All-Ireland athletics champion, the water polo player.

The man who quietly helped those in need, and who shunned publicity.

The philanthropist, the bibliophile, the Smith's fanatic.

The man who taught himself how to speak German.

The man who drove to France to pick up a case of discount wine.

The man who was chased from a London pub after loudly declaring, while standing on the bar after Ireland drew 1-1 with England in the 1990 World Cup, that the English hadn't experienced such an aerial bombardment since the 1941 blitz.

The evening was hosted by Brian's close friend and former teacher Aidan O'Rourke.

From the stage, family, friends, teammates and work colleagues regaled the captivated audience



Julie Conlon and members of her family. R2239303



Aidan O'Rourke presents Julie Conlon, Fionn and Danú with the book 'Celebrating the Life of Brian Conlon' at the end of a very emotional night with many people sharing their memories of a great man. R2239302



Brian Conlon's mother Josephine and his children Danú and Fionn. R2239304



Aidan O'Rourke with the book 'Celebrating the Life of Brian Conlon', Brian's sister Kathy, mother Josephine and brother Ciaran. R2239301



Speaker Shane Mulholland. R2239313



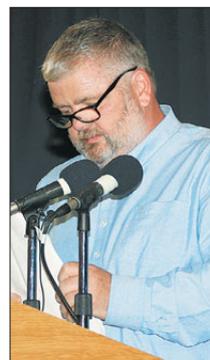
Speaker Dan McKeivitt. R2239315



Speaker Aislinn. R2239307



Speaker DJ Kane. R2239311



Speaker Kevin Heaney. R2239309



Speaker Adrian Toner. R2239312



Speaker Paul Ferris. R2239308



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Newry legend - Brian Conlon

with tales of mischief, ingenuity, passion, spontaneity, humour and compassion.

Presented excellently by the accomplished O'Rourke, the evening was presented in a 'This is Your Life' format, with Brian's wife Julie and children Fionn and Danu presented with the famous red book at the end of the evening.

Proceedings began at the very start with Brian's early years in Cecil Street and Shandon Park, and early signs that he was a sporting talent, especially at Gaelic football.

"A talented and stylish footballer with a great desire to win," said Aidan. "He was two-footed, a great fielder of the ball and just a natural talent."

That raw talent saw him pick up several Rice Cups before going on to win the prestigious MacRory Cup with the Abbey Grammar in 1982. The Mitchels man soon caught the eye of the Down selectors and he represented the Mourne men at both minor and senior levels.

Such was his talent, local Gaelic coach legend Gerry Brown once remarked: "In a lifetime of coaching, one considers himself lucky to have a genius like Sean O'Neill - I was lucky, I had a second in Brian Conlon."

Gaelic glory certainly beckoned, but it was cruelly stripped away from Brian when he sustained a career-ending injury while playing for Queen's University in the Sigerson Cup.

"To Brian, it was all doom and gloom, but little did he realise that there was a bright future for him in a different field," said Aidan. "The old saying was true in Brian's case; when one door closes, another one opens."



Brian's wife Julie last speaker at the Celebration of Brian's Life. R2239314

Brian completed his degree in accountancy and took up his first job as an accountant in Belfast with KPMG.

He moved to London to work with Morgan Stanley, becoming the head controller of the firm's Derivatives trading desk.

He then joined US software Sunguard Group and the fast-moving worlds of finance and technology.

In 1996, Brian returned to Newry and met former

mentor Aidan to help him fill in a few grant forms so he could 'start a wee company'.

"When his financial requirements were passed, First Derivatives was finally launched in the front room of mum Josephine's house," said Aidan. "Here was the start of a world-wide organisation that would eventually employ over 2,500 people."

Tragedy struck the Conlon family within four years of FD's launch.

Brian's younger brother Ronan died in a tragic accident in 2000. The following year, dad Gerry passed away.

First Derivatives continued to grow, opening offices in Hong Kong and San Francisco.

Brian went on to pick up multiple accolades including the Earnest Young Entrepreneur 2010, Belfast Telegraph Business Personality of the Year 2015 and AIM Director of the Year 2018.

Brian Conlon passed away on July 28, 2019, after battling oesophageal cancer. He was 53.

His legacy lives on through The Brian Conlon Foundation.

It was founded in April this year 'to continue the spirit of his renowned generosity in making contributions to the areas in Brian's life that he cared passionately about'.

The Canal Court audience heard about how the Foundation has already helped various groups in Newry.

It was a fitting end to an incredible night, remembering a truly incredible person.



Valerie and Damien Ruddy. R2239317



Kevin and Caroline Heaney. R2239318



Aidan McAleavey, Benny Tierney, Pat Rice, Terry McLoughlin and Neill Collins. R2239321



Alexius and Shane Mulholland, Dermot and Fearghal McGovern. R2239319



Anne Lannon, Vinent Toner and Maureen Toner. R2239305



Aidan and Vincent O'Rourke. R2239316



Guests of Julie Conlon. R2239328



Speakers Eamon Southwell and Paudi McGoldrick. R2239310



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Stephen Poucher, Pat Rice, Colly Burns and Mark McCartan. R2239320



Paul McCartan and guests including Paddy O'Rourke and Dan McCartan. R2239326



Aidan O'Rourke, Patricia Heaney, Ryan Dineen and Declan Reel. R2239306



Guests at DJ Kane's table including Greg Blaney, Colly Burns, Mickey Linden, Ross Carr, Neil Collins and Brendan McKernan. R2239329



Mickey Heaney and guests. R2239325



Abbey CBS past pupils. R2239327



Michael Gibbons, Adrian Toner and Mark O'Neill. R2239322



Liam Boyd, Euan Boyd and Gary Heaney. R2239323



Anna Marie McAlinden, Danielle Watterson and Michelle Guy. R2239324