

Dan McGing

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The leading chartered accountant was the original 'networker', writes Niall Deasy

DAN McGing, who died recently aged 72, was one of the country's leading chartered accountants, with a clientele which included some of the foremost business people of the financial services sector, and with very strong links and associations in the then emerging agri-business sector.

Although Dan always identified himself as a Westport man, he was born in the Imperial Hotel in Castlebar (in Room 31) in 1940. He grew up in Westport where his father was the proprietor of McGing's Shop and Bar on Bridge Street -- a venue which subsequently became a mecca for visitors (now known as 'Matt Molloy's').

He went to school in Mungret College in Co Limerick and his college years were spent in UCD, from where he graduated with a B Comm. He joined the Dublin-based chartered accountancy firm of Keane & Co, qualifying as a chartered accountant in 1968.

In 1968, Dan's firm amalgamated with Kevans and Son, and Peterson Morrison & Co, and at the same time merged with Coopers & Lybrand, one of the then leading accountancy firms in the world.

Following the merger, Dan moved to C&L's offices in London, and subsequently, Brussels, where he spent almost three years, prior to returning to Dublin in 1973. He was appointed a partner in C&L's Irish firm in 1974.

Dan took a great interest in the developing Irish agri-business and in 1975, effectively became partner in charge of C&L Ireland's activities in this area. His client list was extensively filled out with leading names in Ireland's agri-businesses, and he was widely acknowledged as a leading professional in this sector.

During the Seventies, he also developed expertise and involvement in the Irish insurance industry, and he advised the then Department of Industry and Commerce on a number of high-profile cases.

The Eighties brought additional involvements for Dan in the agri sector and financial services sectors, and he also established himself in the world of the semi-State companies.

With Dan's skills and contacts very much in demand, he decided that he wanted to move into more "hands on" and advisory roles in the business community, which led him to take a leave of absence (and eventually step down) from the C&L Ireland partnership. He was subsequently appointed chairman of Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC) in 1987, with a brief to re-engineer the bank, and, ultimately prepare it for sale, as part of the Government's programme of disposal of semi State companies. This was done with considerable success in 1998.

After his retirement from C&L and ACC, he took up several directorships including the VHI, the Irish Press Group, Generali Pan Europe to name but a few. He also worked on a number of assignments for the World Bank, particularly in Jordan.

Dan's curriculum vitae in the 2000s included more directorships (including several in private companies), together with involvement with several charities and religious bodies, as well as private consultancies and forensic engagements. He became a director of several investment funds and was appointed chairman of the National Drug Treatment Board. He was also appointed chairman of the Charitable Infirmary Charitable Trust (which administers the proceeds of the sale of the Jervis Street Hospital).

Dan was naturally gregarious, out-going, and extremely social, and it was said in C&L circles in later years that Dan was probably the inventor of networks, and of networking. Networks were forever appearing in Dan's world, with networks of politicians, agri-sector leaders and key executives, financial service personnel, civil servants, gardai, the legal profession, the judiciary and the medical profession to name but a modest sample of Dan's society.

Dan's boundless good humour, and good nature, were legendary, and it was impossible to engage with him -- even in tough and demanding times -- without him concluding with a choice "bon mot" or amusing comment.

Dan is survived by his beloved wife Mary, and his much loved family, Aileen, Donal, Caitriona and Frank.

"Ar dheis De go raibh a anam dilis."

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