

Obituary

In Memory of *Anne O'Byrne* (1945–2008)



Anne O'Byrne was born in 1945, the second of a family of seven which was later to win glory playing for the purple and gold. Anne was tremendously proud of her family, the Quigleys, and was a passionate hurling supporter. She received her primary education in the local national school and her secondary education in Arklow, Co. Wicklow.

Following this she trained as a nurse in Dublin, London and Glasgow. She also went on to study a Diploma in Public Administration, a BA Degree in Economics/Geography and a Diploma in Counselling from Maynooth College. For the main part of her career, Anne worked in Peamount Hospital in Dublin, where she held a number of positions including Clinical Nurse Manager.

Anne worked in the credit union movement for over 25 years. She became a director of Blessington & District Credit Union in 1977, serving as Assistant Treasurer, Secretary and Chairperson of the credit union and in various other roles throughout her life. One of the achievements she was very proud of in that time was the development of an enterprise centre in Blessington. This centre encouraged local people, including members of the credit union, to set up their own small businesses/enterprises.

“May your God give you the greatest gift of all: the gift of good health. And if not may He grant you the courage to bear it. And what is courage? It is the strength to get from one moment to the next.”

Anne O'Byrne



Anne was also chosen to be a delegate to Chapter 7 (a regional gathering of credit unions) of the Irish League of Credit Unions (ILCU). As a committed believer in the power of co-operation, Anne served more than diligently in every position she served and she did serve in virtually every position!

In 1997 Anne was elected to the Board of the ILCU. She served on a number of different committees and her diligence, dedication and ability were rewarded in 2003 when she became Vice-President of the Irish League of Credit Unions. On the 24th April 2005, at the Biennial Delegate Meeting in Killarney, Anne was elected to the post of President at becoming the first female President of the organisation.

Anne's achievements during her two year term of office were considerable and included the following items

- 1) A review of the 1997 Credit Union Act to enable it to better meet the needs of the 21st Century.
- 2) A review and development of the Savings Protection Scheme.
- 3) Sought to improve and develop relationships with the Financial Regulator and IFSRA.
- 4) Implemented the findings of a review committee of the movement.

But more than these were the so-called ordinary everyday functions of the movement. Anne travelled the length and breadth of the country to attend numerous meetings, AGMs and other gatherings of credit unions. She saw it as the key part of her function to go out, listen to, bring back and respond to the needs and concerns of 'ordinary' people who are credit union members – because for Anne, there were no such thing as 'ordinary members'.

To Anne every single individual counted – she was a real people person. Anne, as a person, was a bundle of energy, vivacious, caring and she wore her heart on her sleeve. She enlivened every occasion. She had a passionate love of her vocation, of credit union and her country, but most especially of her family. This not only extended to this country but to the international credit union family for Anne was a director of the International Development Foundation which assists the formation and growth of credit unions in Russia, Albania, Ethiopia, Gambia and elsewhere. Anne had visited many of these areas and was very moved by the conditions the people of these areas had to live in.

“Her help, counsel and kindness to a young person starting her nursing profession has never been forgotten”.

Three quotations cited in recent days, help towards understanding her character:

“Anne took her professional training as a carer into her personal life”.

“Her kindness to her patients was her hallmark”

“Her help, counsel and kindness to a young person starting her nursing profession has never been forgotten”.

Anne almost invariably finished every speech/talk she made with the following

“May your God give you the greatest gift of all: the gift of good health. And if not may He grant you the courage to bear it. And what is courage? It is the strength to get from one moment to the next.”

On behalf of the movement, we extend our sincere condolences to Anne's husband William, daughter Siobhán and son Philip, and are grateful for the memory of a valued colleague and friend.

“On behalf of the O'Byrne family, we would like to thank everyone from the credit union movement for attending Anne's funeral. It was deeply appreciated, more than words can say.”

William, Siobhán & Philip