

Jerome Dufficy 1946 – 2012

Jerome Dufficy passed away on 20th August 2012 after a long illness that, heroically assisted by his family, he bore with incredible dignity, fortitude, and good humour. In early 2007, he was stricken with motor neuron disease which caused a slow deterioration of his muscles leading to a gradual loss of mobility and of his ability to communicate. The strain of this was all the greater because Jerome had been such an active and sociable person in his family, social and professional life.



Jerome was born into a farming family in Tulsk, Co. Roscommon in 1946. He won a scholarship to Summerhill College in Sligo, and from there he went to University College Dublin where he studied forestry, graduating in 1970 with an honours degree. He immediately joined the Forest Service where he was assigned to Land Acquisition in the north-west, based in Sligo and for a time in Letterkenny. His courtesy and his humorous personality together with his farming background made him “a natural” at negotiating land deals; farmers and other land vendors all enjoyed doing business with him. Among his proudest achievements in this phase of his career was the acquisition of many of the lands now supporting successful plantations. He was then transferred to the Timber Marketing section, a post he held at the establishment of Coillte in 1989. This new challenge gave him the opportunity to display his inventive and flexible character. His independent and questioning mind brought clarity and transparency to whatever task was in hand, and he played a major role in the introduction of several important company-wide innovations. As with the land vendors, his easy manner with both timber customers and Coillte colleagues allowed him to introduce change with the minimum of fuss.

Jerome was a GAA enthusiast all his life. In his youth he won an All-Ireland under-21 Football medal with Roscommon in 1966 and later was everpresent on the UCD team playing in many Sigerson campaigns. In maturity he was an active member of Rosses Point GAA club and even used his land acquisition skills to source a playing pitch from a neighbouring farmer. He later was a key figure in bringing about the merger of Rosses Point Club with Drumcliffe where his son Kevin is now a leading player. He was equally active in Rosses Point Golf Club where, as well as being a gifted and competitive player, he was Chairman of the Management Committee and of the Greens Committee. On the Greens Committee, he had a lasting effect on the course when he created a famous bunker, the end of many a potentially good round, now referred to as Jerome’s Grave!

Jerome was an easy going, sympathetic and loyal person who enjoyed company. As a student he was always ready to start a sing-song accompanied by his trusty guitar. He was well known in his local community in Sligo as a choir singer, community worker, and good neighbour. He built up a lot of very close friends through his life and was always ready to help whenever needed, for example using

his DIY expertise. Above all else though, Jerome was a family man. He was devoted to his wife Máire and their children and grandchildren. In his illness, Jerome was supported in an incredible manner by Máire and all the family who displayed many of the characteristics of Jerome himself in their selfless caring. It was an elevating experience to see how Jerome accepted the support of his family and friends in a most dignified way that could only be imagined by others. He did not let his illness prevent him from enjoying company as was shown by the way he clearly loved having a coffee in the golf club with his pals. In latter times, while he was restricted to being a listener, he invariably displayed absolute interest and made all feel comfortable in spite of his severe restriction of mobility and speech. He missed nothing, and if there was any bit of *divilment* to be had, one could see him roaring laughing just with his eyes!

To Máire and to his family Colm, Sarah, Paula, Kevin and Anna, grandchildren, his brothers and sisters and all his extended family, we extend our deepest sympathy.

Dermot O'Brien and Paul Clinch