

## Dr. Jack Durand 1929 – 2012

The death on 16<sup>th</sup> December of Dr. Jack Durand at the age of 83 is an inestimable loss, not only to his wife, family and relatives, but also to a wide circle of friends and colleagues worldwide as well as in Ireland. The loss is not limited to people, but also to forestry as a commercial enterprise; as an environmental necessity and as an amenity to be enjoyed by young and old.

He was born in Waterford city, son of Pierce and Mary (nee Connolly) and attended school with the Christian Brothers in that city. In his youth, Jack was a keen sportsman with a county medal for hurling with his native Waterford and also medals for rowing with two universities, UCC and TCD. He was a keen fisherman. In 1950 Jack graduated from UCC with a BE degree in Civil Engineering and worked for a short time with various local authorities in Ireland and the OPW (Arterial Drainage), before going to Canada where he worked in British Columbia designing forest roads. The experience and environment awoke in him the desire to study forestry. In today's world, change of career is common but when Jack made his decision it was most unusual and required courage and conviction to relinquish a permanent job and become a student once again.



In 1960 he graduated from TCD with a First Class Honours degree in Forestry. This was an important year for him as he also met and married Sheila. He entered the State forest service in January 1961. In 1964 he was promoted in charge of the newly formed Amenity Section which dealt with recreation and the “Open Forest” policy. Shortly afterwards he went to Duke University, North Carolina, to study best practice in US forest and parks departments. In 1969, Jack was awarded a PhD by the National University of Ireland for his thesis “The evolution of State Forestry in Ireland”.

In 1972 Dr. Durand was appointed Director of the John F. Kennedy Arboretum near New Ross replacing another notable forester, the late Tony Hanan (1923-1972). He was Director there until 1978 when he was transferred to Dublin where he remained in charge of amenity and private forestry until he retired in 1988. Jack took up the challenge of establishing the new arboretum with characteristic verve. In particular, his care for the fledgling plant collections was evident from harmonised extensions to the shelter belts. On ground shaped to simulate hills and valleys, he planned the display of 400 species and varieties, grouped by genus. His love of plants was reflected by his interest in other collections. He was especially fond of the nearby Woodstock, Inistioge. His advice was sought by Forest Management when encroaching scrub was being cleared from the arboretum. He delighted in the rediscovery and measurement of so many fine specimens, especially the champion *Sequoia sempervirens*, central to this collection.

Over the years Jack acted variously as Business Editor of *Irish Forestry* and as

Treasurer and Vice-President of the Society. He also published articles in the Journal "Forest haulage roads in British Columbia" (Vol. XX, No. 1, 1963) and "Building a Resource - 50 years of Irish Forestry" (Vol. 49, No.s 1&2, 1992). The latter article was based on The Augustine Henry Memorial Lecture he gave at UCD in 1992 where he marked the 50-year anniversary of the founding of the Society, as well as honouring the contribution of Augustine Henry to forestry in Ireland –in particular for his publication of *The Trees of Great Britain and Ireland*. He also contributed on amenity matters to "*The Forests of Ireland*" which was edited by H.M. FitzPatrick in 1965. Other publications "*Ash for Hurleys and Profit*" initially published by Trees for Ireland and more recently by the Tree Council of Ireland. Together with Donal Magner he wrote a booklet on "*The Trees of All Hallows*".

Jack was also active in the Tree Council of Ireland, Trees for Ireland, An Taisce and anywhere that he could promote an interest in silviculture. His enthusiasm for trees and forestry was inspirational. He was a great admirer of the famous Scottish plant collector David Douglas (1799- 1834). While on one of his many global trips, Jack arranged for a memorial to David Douglas to be erected in Hawaii where Douglas died. In 2009, the Forestry Commission arranged a commemoration of David Douglas at Pitlochry, Scotland. Jack organised a small group of forestry colleagues to attend this function. The following day he brought the group to the Botanic Gardens at Edinburgh and afterwards to Glasgow to witness Celtic in action. Forest utilization at its best!!

After retirement from the state service, Jack established himself as a private consultant in arboreal matters and took an active part in local community projects. In later years he and his wife Sheila became world travellers. Postcards to arboricultural friends depicting some obscure species would carry the message "Doubtless you recognise this tree immediately"!

Jack was generous with his knowledge. His integrity and erudition were combined with modesty. If he disagreed, he would express his views firmly and with courtesy and if the occasion allowed, with humour. He was a committed Christian and his religion was very important to him. The Society of Irish Foresters has elected twenty three Honorary Members for their outstanding contributions to the aims of the Society. Dr Durand was delighted to become the twenty fourth Honorary Member in November 2012.

Our deepest sympathy goes to his beloved and loving wife Sheila and his sons and daughters, Lonan, Sheila, Paul, Ciara and Marian. Also to all fourteen grandchildren and his brother Michael and indeed to all who mourn the loss of a good friend and colleague.

*Go dtuga Dia suaimhneas síoraí dá anam dílis.*

Dr. Neil Murray