

Michael (Mick) Leonard 1931 – 2022

Mick Leonard passed away peacefully surrounded by his beloved family on 2nd May 2022 in his 91st year.

Mick was one eleven siblings, nine of whom survived to adulthood. He was born on 3rd October 1931 to Peter and Kate Leonard (née Bolger) at Coolgreaney, Co. Wexford. He was the last surviving male sibling and had three surviving sisters: Mary, Kathleen, and Margaret. Although he lived elsewhere in Ireland for most of his life, he remained a proud Wexford man throughout.



He received his primary education at Coolgreaney NS and his secondary education in St Patrick's Academy, Arklow (later to become Arklow CBS). He began his forestry education at Avondale Forestry College, Co. Wicklow in 1950 and completed his studies there in 1953.

Mick worked in several forests in his early career in forestry; Louisburg, Co. Mayo, Graiuenamanagh, Co. Carlow - where he carved out a promising career in football, before being promoted as forester in charge at Saggart Forest, Co. Dublin in the early 1960s. Thereafter, he was stationed in the border areas mostly. When in Dundalk Forest, Co. Louth he met his future wife, Maire Kelly from Warrenpoint Co. Down. They lived in Warrenpoint for many years. They were married for approximately 15 years when tragically Maire died, and Mick suddenly found himself a widower while in this early 40's with three young sons to look after.

Some years later, he had the good fortune to meet Kathleen Lee from Ballyjamesduff, Co. Cavan and had the good sense to marry her. They had two daughters and remained a devoted couple for 45 years up until his death. Mick transferred to Cootehill forest before being promoted to inspector in 1969 and was assigned to Acquisition in Sligo before moving to Cavan as Assistant District Inspector. Subsequently he was promoted to the post of District Inspector in Cavan and ultimately as District Manager when Coillte was formed in 1989. He availed of the voluntary severance package in Coillte in 1993.

A career in forestry was the perfect fit for him. It complemented his love of the outdoors, nature and wildlife and his interest in what became known as 'green issues' such as the effects of pollution. Forestry was not just a job for him it was a hobby and a passion, He indulged this passion by creating his own forest in Lavey, Co. Cavan which he managed and worked on deep into his retirement,

even into his eighties. He regularly brought his children to the forest when they were young to help with the planting, pruning and the digging of roads and drains. The children felt most of the jobs were tasks he had contrived to keep them from idleness. But as the years progressed, his grand plan and vision was realised in the production of what was and still remains an impressive forest. That forest is only a short distance from where he is buried.

In life Mick was a wonderful role model – as a man, as a husband and as a parent. He epitomised the virtues of hard work, humility, loyalty, and generosity. He was consistent and dependable. Guided by his strong Christian values he was honest and treated everyone equally. The predominant feature of his long life was the primacy of family to which everything else was secondary.

Throughout his long life, he displayed great resilience in dealing with the difficulties he encountered and he needed all that resilience during his final years of ill health. During that time, he accepted all the indignities that came with deteriorating health but throughout he was uncomplaining and accepting of his lot.

He was predeceased by his first wife Máire. To his wife Kathleen and his children Mark, Damian, Feargal, Mary, and Catherine we offer our sincere sympathy.

PJ Fitzpatrick