

The Patricia Leggett Playwriting Scholarship

Patricia Leggett's legacy lives on through the naming of The Lir's Playwriting Scholarship

Patricia Leggett (nee Carbury) was born in Dublin (1936). Raised by her grandparents, she lived above the family shop in Benburb Street. Her earliest childhood memories included the regular gatherings of family, neighbours and friends at her grandparents' home for ballad sessions, her younger brother occasionally stealing a sip of porter from her grandfather's cup!

Patricia, an outgoing, vibrant and adventurous young woman, grew-up with a great love for the outdoors, enjoying hiking and cycling. At 16 years she set about making plans for her first ski-holiday – a rare excursion for anyone growing-up in 1950s Ireland. Unfortunately, she never got to make this trip. While cycling one weekend with a group of friends, she was knocked-off her bicycle and was badly injured. She spent six months in hospital and despite best efforts, she lost her leg.

After a short period of convalescence, Patricia resolved not to let this challenge deter her. Eager to occupy her time productively, she was an avid reader and quite the wordsmith, taking-up letter writing as a hobby. One of her pen pals was a young soldier, Robert Leggett. Their friendship quickly developed into a romance and the pair married in 1957, having four children during their long marriage.

Patricia wrote poetry, was an arts-lover, theatre-goer and had a passion for ballet. Despite her personal setbacks, Patricia found the time to train in speech and language therapy, helping one of her sons overcome his personal disability.

After rearing her children, Patricia found time to become one of the founders of the Amputee Support Group. She appeared frequently on TV and radio to promote the work of the organisation. As part of this work, she visited hospitals and offered counselling to people pre or post amputation. She helped them come to terms with their shared reality having experienced it herself.

In 2011, life was once again to deal Patricia a cruel blow, being diagnosed with bowel cancer and undergoing surgery. Those in care commented that she was lucky to be alive and must have been in agony for some time. Nurses visited this incredible woman who maintained a smiling and happy demeanour throughout it all. Patricia's mantra was that you have to get on with whatever life throws at you; onwards and upwards!

Patricia lost her battle with cancer 1 August 2013. She survived to see her six grandchildren and her first great-grandchild.

The Lir Academy would like to express its immense gratitude to Patricia's daughter and son-in-law, Janet and James Curley, for choosing The Lir's Playwriting Scholarship with which to remember and honour the lifetime and legacy of Patricia Leggett. (1936 – 2013)