



The late Dermot Earley, RIP, 1948–2010

Taoiseach expresses sadness at death of Dermot Earley

Taoiseach Brian Cowen has expressed sadness at the death of Dermot Earley, lauding his leadership and charisma and saying that he was a great role model.

Mr. Earley, the renowned former Roscommon footballer and recently retired Chief of the Irish Defence Forces, died in Co. Kildare yesterday (Wednesday). He had been ill in recent months.

"I am saddened to learn of the death of Lieutenant General (Retired) Dermot Earley. Dermot Earley was one of this country's most distinguished public servants and through his commitment, his intelligence, his leadership and his charisma he brought great distinction to himself, his family and Ireland.

"Dermot was a great role model for everyone in our Defence Forces and he was an innovative and extremely competent Chief of Staff who carried out his duties with the minimum of fuss and the maximum of efficiency.

"Dermot Earley bravely and selflessly gave of himself to build peace across the globe. His courageous work with the UN was rooted in a desire to bring peace to people in the parts of the world who had only previously known conflict. It is no exaggeration to say that in the truest sense of the phrase, Dermot was a champion of peace and his long career pays testimony to this.

Murphy saddened by passing of Dermot Earley

Strokestown-based councillor, Eugene Murphy this week expressed his sadness at the passing of Dermot Earley.

"I am very sad at the news of his passing. He was a great ambassador for County Roscommon and an outstanding citizen that I always looked up to. I just want to extend my sympathy to his wife and family."

Kelly expresses condolences

Cllr. John Kelly this week expressed his condolences following the death of Dermot Earley.

"I would like to express my condolences to the family of Lieutenant General Dermot Earley, who sadly passed away today (Wednesday). As one of our finest Gaelic football players General Earley was a colossus on every field that he graced. It is often said that he was the greatest player never to win an All-Ireland, but as a two-time All-Star and five-time Connacht Champion his achievements in the sport were nevertheless, considerable.

"If his sporting career was characterised by strong leadership and determination, so too was his military life. He served with distinction not just at home, but also abroad. He served on a number UN missions in the Middle East and Lebanon, and was subsequently posted to UN headquarters where he was Deputy Military Advisor to the Secretary General.

"As Defence Forces Chief of Staff, he was a hugely modernising influence and enhanced the reputation of our Military across the world. Ar dheis Dé go raibh an anam."

"Dermot's courage and character were always evident on the field of play. He played Gaelic football for Roscommon for twenty years and he was one of the finest Gaelic footballers of his generation. I recently had the honour of presenting Dermot with a Distinguished Service Medal.

Fondly remembered

"Dermot will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by everyone who had the pleasure of knowing him. I extend my deepest sympathies to Dermot's wife Mary and their six children. Leaba i measc laochra Gaeil go raibh aige. Beannacht Dé lena anam."

Minister for Defence, Tony Killeen TD, this week paid tribute to the "outstanding leadership and ability" of the former Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Dermot Earley.

"I have learned with shock and sadness of the death of the Lieutenant General Dermot Earley. To his wife Mary, his mother Kitty and his family I would like to extend my deepest sympathy.

"Since taking over as Minister for Defence, I have encountered time and again evidence of Dermot's outstanding leadership and ability. Because of his unique blend of leadership and personal warmth, he was held in the highest esteem by all who served in the Defence Forces. To the wider community he will, of course,

always be remembered as an outstanding sportsman having achieved success with his native county Roscommon and his adopted county Kildare. Ar dheis Dé go raibh an anam dílis."

The Fine Gael Leader, Enda Kenny TD, has extended his condolences to the family of Dermot Earley following the news of his death.

"Dermot Earley was, I believe, one of the most

iconic Chiefs of Staff of the Defence Forces since Michael Collins. Dermot was an outstanding role model in his enthusiastic and committed approach to all aspects of his life. In his service to his country he was exemplary, in his pursuit of sporting excellence he stood above all but the greatest footballers of our time.

"As a footballer he served his club, his county and his province with dis-

tingtion for many years. I watched him play on many occasions and would share the view of so many that he is, perhaps, the best player of the modern era not to have won an All-Ireland medal.

"I met Dermot regularly through his football and military career and regarded him as a friend. On this sad day I'd like to pay my respects and offer my condolences to his wife Mary and their six children."



Major General and Chief of Staff elect Dermot Earley pictured being congratulated by Minister for Defence Willie O'Dea after his appointment in April 2007.

Naughten expresses his sadness

Commenting on the announcement of the death of Dermot Earley, Roscommon TD Denis Naughten said: "It was with great sadness that I have learned of the passing of one of Roscommon's great ambassadors, Dermot Earley.

"The passing of the Dermot Earley will leave a great void not only in GAA circles and throughout the entire county of Roscommon, but also in the Defence

Forces which he led with such distinction.

"Not only was Dermot Earley a great legend on the football pitch but he was also the premier ambassador for our county. His passing will be felt even more deeply by his family. To Dermot's wife Mary and their six children, I wish to express my heartfelt sympathy. Ar dheis Dé go raibh an anam."

'A true sportsman and wonderful player' – O'Mahony

Fine Gael Sports Spokesperson and Mayo manager John O'Mahony TD has paid tribute to Dermot Earley after the sad passing of the 'greatest player never to win an All-Ireland'.

"Everybody involved in sport is aware of what a wonderful player Dermot Earley was, but I will particularly remember Dermot as a true sportsman.

"My abiding memory is of him being carried off the pitch shoulder-high by Mayo players the day he retired in 1985.

It really does take someone special to be acknowledged in such a way by an opposition team. Known as the 'greatest player never to win an All-Ireland', Dermot left a great impression wherever he went. I attended Saint Nathy's College in Ballaghaderreen where Dermot had also gone to school and his legacy there is felt as strongly today as it was in my day. My thoughts today are with Mary and his six children, Dermot will be sadly missed. Ar dheis Dé go raibh an anam."

A truly great Irishman – Feighan

"A great loss to country and county" was how Frank Feighan TD described the passing of Lieutenant General Dermot Earley.

"Many knew Dermot from his term as Roscommon County footballer from 1963 to 1985 and what a talented player and magnificent sportsman he was. His military career was equally distinguished as he proceeded through the ranks to the highest post in the land. His contribution to the modernising of our defence forces and his service both at home and abroad was outstanding, particularly his role with the UN in the mid seventies. Above all else it was Dermot Earley the pure gentleman that shone through with everyone who met him.

"To his wife Mary his son and daughters, brothers, sisters and mother I extend my deepest personal sympathy on the passing of a truly great Irishman."

'A gifted soldier' – Leyden

Roscommon Senator Terry Leyden has expressed deep regret and sadness at the untimely passing of Lt. General Dermot Earley, former Chief of Staff of the Irish Army.

Speaking from the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, Senator Leyden extended his sympathies to Mr. Earley's wife, Mary, their six children, his mother and extended family.

"Lieutenant General Earley was an outstanding Chief of Staff of the Irish Army, a gifted soldier – both at home and with the United Nations – and a fantastic sportsman; representing his home County Roscommon, and Ireland with immense grace and presence.

"I had the honour of meeting him on a number of occasions and he never forgot his Roscommon roots; so much so that he was bestowed as the first 'Freeman of Roscommon' in January 2009.

"I am certain that Lieutenant General Earley was held in the highest esteem by every serving member of the armed forces; and his record is one that should be aspired to. Ar dheis Dé go raibh an anam."

'A great servant of this country' – Finneran

Minister of State Michael Finneran, TD for Roscommon and South Leitrim, this week expressed his deep regret to the family of recently retired Chief of the Defence Forces and Roscommon native, Lieutenant General Dermot Earley.

"Dermot Earley was a personal friend of mine and my deepest sympathies go out to his wife Mary, sons Dermot, David and Conor, his daughters Paula, Anne Marie and Noelle and his mother Kitty Earley. My sympathies also go out to his colleagues in the Irish Defence Forces and in the GAA, who will be deeply saddened by his loss. I was with him in September 2009 at the opening of the extension of Gortaganny National School, where his late father Peadar was Principal and also his mother Kitty was a teacher.

"Dermot was great servant of this country and his loss will be deeply felt, not alone in Roscommon where he was born, in Kildare where he lived in recent years, but by his friends and family throughout the country. Ar dheis Dé go raibh an anam dílis," said Minister Finneran.



Barry Molloy makes a presentation to Dermot Earley at a Civic Reception held at the Courthouse, Roscommon.