

# The O'Reilly Foundation Scholarships

## The best and the brightest our nation has to offer



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FROM brilliant pianists to gifted engineers to development aid workers to specialist international peace keepers – the O'Reilly scholars are among the brightest and best young people this country has to offer.

The award of €50,800 over two years allows the scholars to devote their full time to their studies, with no restrictions on the selection of both academic discipline and university institution.

Two scholarships are awarded annually and there are typically more than 100 applicants overall.

The basic academic requirement is an outstanding high honours undergraduate record coupled with proven leadership qualities and the competition is understandably at a high level, says Prof John Kelly, who chairs the O'Reilly Scholarship Board.

Although they are studying and working in different parts of the world, an *esprit de corps* is already clearly evident among the scholars. So too is the sense that they want to 'give something back' in return for the unique opportunities the scholarships afforded them.

DUBLINER Michael King embodies this sense of genuine altruism. He's the founder and former chief executive of SUAS, an education-focussed international development agency which is growing from strength to strength.

Since 2002, more than 280 SUAS volunteers have worked with schools and education projects in India and Kenya. By 2009, it aims to send 180 volunteers per year to work on 20 overseas projects.

The scholarship allowed Michael to undertake a



Hosts Sir Anthony and Lady Chryss O'Reilly at the O'Reilly Foundation Scholarship Programme Scholars Dinner in Castlemartin, Kilcullen, Co Kildare, with Professor John Kelly and the scholars. MARTIN NOLAN

master's degree in economics and international development at Harvard University which he found to be a rigorous experience.

It transformed his career from being a social entre-

preneur to an economist. "It changed my focus from redistribution to productivity and competitiveness – which at the end of the day are ultimately part of the same circle."

What has not changed is his belief in the importance of working for others and the magic that occurs when a person sets out to work for others.

"Hopefully I will continue

to develop my commitment to working for others in the coming years," adds Michael, now a leading economist with the National Competitiveness Council in Dublin.

## An achievement that lasts for a lifetime



**LADY CHRYSS O'REILLY**

FEEL exceptionally privileged to be associated with the O'Reilly Foundation, and indeed act as Chairman of its Board of Trustees, which comprises my husband's six children.

The Selectors are all Irish and are prominent people in the varied worlds of academia, business, medicine, public service and law. Their first chairman fittingly was the legendary Dr Ken Whittaker who still attends our annual dinners. He was followed by the current Chairman, Professor John Kelly.

The Selectors all take their role very seriously, and although they are exceptionally busy people, they donate their valuable time to select the O'Reilly Scholars each year. This in itself is a great compliment to the prestige and importance of these schol-

arships. To date, since the Foundation's inception in 1999, there are 21 O'Reilly Scholars. Some of the older scholars have already returned to Ireland, and others are still abroad. The ratio to date would be about 19% scholars now working or study-

ing in Ireland, and 81% still abroad, some temporarily, and others seemingly more entrenched for the longer term.

All, however, maintain their contacts with Ireland and many work for Irish organisations abroad, either profession-

ally or through social and charitable endeavours.

A particularly satisfying dividend has been the rapport and contact maintained by the scholars through themselves. Through the coordination of the Foundation Secretary, Amanda Hopkins,

the scholars also keep the Foundation regularly informed of their ongoing achievements, progress in their careers and milestones in their lives.

THE opportunity to see such bright, articulate young people evolve from year to year has been and continues to be an immensely enriching, interesting and rewarding experience for the Selectors and the Trustees.

These meetings have encouraged us all to believe that the O'Reilly Scholars will make a real contribution to the future of Ireland.

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