OUR GRADUATES
Welcome to the School of Law, University of Limerick’s first brochure of testimonials. The School of Law owes its origins to the appointment of Professor T Henry Ellis as a lecturer in Law to the European Studies department in 1974 who developed a law option as part of the revised BA degree in European Studies. The European Studies Department included two components: European Integration and Administration (EIA) and Languages & Social Studies. Law was part of EIA. In the late 1980s EIA was further divided with a new section, Law and Insurance, created. In 1993, the Insurance section was moved to the College of Business, now known as the Kemmy Business School (KBS). Professor Ellis introduced the first interdisciplinary professional degree, the BA in Law & Accounting in the early 1990s. In 2000, the Law Department became known as the School of Law, under the guidance of Professor Ray Friel. The School of Law is part of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS).

Our programmes have grown expeditiously over the years. The BA in Law and European Studies became a LLB in 1997, we also added the Graduate Entry LLB and Evening LLB to our suite of programmes. Our first Masters programme, the LLM in European and Comparative Law was established in 1997. We now have three LLM programmes, the award winning LLM General, the LLM/MA in Human Rights in Criminal Justice and the LLM in International Commercial Law. The School of Law was the winner of the AIB Law School of the Year in 2017, and in March 2018, the School of Law won a Delta award for innovation in teaching. The School of Law has a vibrant PhD community with over twenty PhD students. We offer a BA in Applied Policing and Criminal Justice and a MA in Serious Crime Investigation, with both programmes delivered on a blended/online learning basis. The School of Law has secured recognition of our Law programmes by the Bar Council of India. The School of Law is only the second law school in Ireland to achieve such recognition.

Our graduates have followed a number of varied career paths from Senior News Reporter with Today FM to Technical Advisor, at the Council of Europe Development Bank. Some have become Professors in Law in top-class universities, while a number are Partners or Associates in leading law firms in Ireland and abroad.

Our undergraduate and post graduate degrees embrace a sustained commitment to “law in action” which provides our graduates with a multi-faceted legal education which imbues not only academic excellence but also equips our graduates with the transferable skills required to excel in their chosen career.
I graduated from the BA (Law and European Studies) programme in 1996. I then started a LLM (by research), which I completed at UL in 1998. The education I received at UL has served me well. I really enjoyed the European Studies and multidisciplinary nature of my degree. Law does not operate in a vacuum and being exposed to the political, social and historical context was great. I was, and remain, hopeless at languages but that was, and remains, my fault and not UL’s!

In my final year we had to do a mini-dissertation (FYP). I did mine on an esoteric area of international law, which I managed, with supervisory assistance, to get published in the Irish Law Times (clearly, a slow news day for the editor). That sparked a longer term interest in publishing esoteric writing i.e., I became an academic.

My area of interest is sports law and my masters at UL was on legal liability for sports injuries. My supervisor was Dr Eoin Quill who obligingly gave me a practical tutorial in sports injuries every Friday at the staff kick about. I managed to get a job lecturing law at UL (thanks to the then Head of School, Professor Ray Friel) from 1998 to 2004 until a new Head of School saw through me and I left. I ended up at Queen’s University in Belfast, developing my specialism in sports law and ADR. I was appointed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in 2016.

My most recent, began July 2017, is as a Professor of Law at the University of Melbourne. Melbourne is ranked in the top 10 law schools globally. There are many reasons why I got the job in Australia but UL, and the people who taught me there, are chief among them. Thanks to you all.
I graduated from the University of Limerick with a Bachelor of Laws in 2008 and went on to pursue a Master of Laws (Commercial) at the University College Dublin in 2009. I trained in Arthur Cox, Dublin and upon my qualification in 2013, joined the firm’s Corporate Group. After working in Arthur Cox for a further three years, I moved to the London office of Latham & Watkins where I am currently a corporate associate with a practice focused on mergers, acquisitions, restructurings, joint ventures and general corporate matters.

Studying law at the University of Limerick prepares one well for a variety of marketplace careers, as students are offered the opportunity to obtain invaluable exposure to the skills, knowledge and support of some of the top legal academics in the country. From a personal perspective, the programme offered me exposure to an extensive amount of legal theory; an experience which equipped me with a solid understanding of, and ever-developing interest in, law. It also equipped me with the ability to adapt quickly to new situations, methodologies and subject matters, as well as perform effectively under pressure. To this day, the skills that I acquired during my degree help me to provide clients with creative legal solutions to complex challenges.
I am originally from Spain, from where I obtained a law degree in 2003 from Universidad de Vigo with a year abroad as Erasmus at University of Limerick. After my law degree, I remained at University of Limerick to do the LLM program, which provided me with an invaluable opportunity to further my academic education. I was fortunate to have met extraordinary people, including my now wife (and the mother of my three children) as well as inspiring lecturers and great friends. The LLM helped me to develop my research skills and gave me the opportunity to assist in teaching undergraduate students. The experience was so fulfilling that I moved on to write a PhD, building on a research topic that I identified during my LLM dissertation under the supervision of Professor Friel. The LLM, together with the instrumental support from the academic staff from University of Limerick, served me as the springboard to obtain a scholarship for a PhD at UCC and later to pursue an academic career in the UK.

Currently I am a Professor at University of Leicester where I started working in 2008 –first as a Lecturer, then as Senior Lecturer (2013), and from 2016 as a Professor of Civil Justice. I am also a fellow of the National Centre for Technology and Dispute Resolutions (University of Massachusetts) and in 2012 I was the Gould Research Fellow at Stanford University. My publications, including three books, have consolidated my standing as a recognised researcher in the field of civil justice. As a result, I have carried out various research projects, and I have been commissioned to write reports by institutions such as the European Parliament and the European Commission. I am regularly invited to speak at international conferences, which in the past few years I have done in 15 different countries around the world. My journey however started at University of Limerick – its LLM was instrumental in shaping my professional future. It is for this reason that I consider University of Limerick my alma mater and I am very proud to be one of its alumni.
I chose to study Law and European Studies in UL for several reasons. Firstly, I was always interested in studying law, and considered it a solid degree to start with. I also loved History, and was thrilled to be able to do two Arts subjects along with what I viewed as a ‘serious’ discipline. Coming from a bilingual home, it was important for me to be able to study German through a language department (rather than as legal German as in some other universities).

The reputation UL had at the time, and still does, was that Co-op was hugely beneficial in securing future employment. Perhaps ironically, Co-op taught me that I didn’t want to be a solicitor. While my placement was very interesting and a good fit, I quickly realised it wasn’t the job for me. Knowing what I do now, that too is invaluable.

Upon graduation, I spent some time working with United Airlines (thanks to my fluent German after Erasmus!), after which I spent five magical years in New York studying film and theatre and auditioning and acting. That wasn’t entirely part of the grand plan, but having moved from home for college, it was much easier making a fresh start in a new city. I also always had at the back of my mind that I could fall back on the law degree, and if truth be told, it was something my parents could cling on to! While NY was thrilling, staying legal was expensive, and I knew I’d given the acting career my best shot. I returned home to study a Masters in Journalism at DCU, which also has a strong culture of work placements (which they call Intra). I spent my Intra at Today FM, after which I freelanced with Newstalk and Today FM, where I still remain, today as Senior News Reporter.
I am a partner in McCann FitzGerald and my main area of practice is in financial services regulation. I spent five enjoyable years in UL and graduated with an LL.B. in Law & European Studies (2001) and an LL.M. in European and Comparative Law (2002).

I was attracted to studying law in UL because of the university’s progressive approach to education, notably including the co-operative education programme. I availed of that programme to spend a semester of my undergraduate degree on placement with a Dublin law firm. This provided a terrific insight into the practical application of law and strengthened my ambition to qualify as a solicitor. I also appreciated the opportunity at undergraduate level to combine my study of law with studies in History and French, which helps to give a more rounded third-level experience. The LL.M. programme was excellent. While I decided to study comparative law purely out of interest, I was pleasantly surprised to discover how practically useful it can be to have an understanding of different legal systems, especially in a firm like McCann FitzGerald where we are regularly involved in cross-border transactions.

UL is widely recognised as a modern and, compared to its Irish peers, relatively young university. I believe UL rightly embraces this identity through its commitment to ‘law in action’. My experience of this is that UL provides a legal education which fosters not just academic excellence but also the skills necessary to apply academic knowledge in a practical context. In my view, this is the best approach to equipping graduates with the skills necessary to flourish in a fast-changing business and legal environment. We strive to recruit the very best talent in McCann FitzGerald and I am heartened to see through my work with trainees and young solicitors that UL continues to produce graduates of a very high calibre. I should mention too that the university has an impressive track-record in McCann FitzGerald’s third-level moot court competition, The Advocate and I wish every success to future UL teams in that competition!
Before starting my PhD at the School of Law at the University of Limerick, I had worked for several years in the construction industry in Ireland, where I began as a civil engineer and became increasingly involved in the management aspects of projects. I had previously attained an MBA, and was interested in augmenting my technical and managerial experience with a legal qualification in the construction field. There were several options available to me, but a PhD in Law gave me the freedom to choose my preferred area of focus: variations to construction contracts.

The position I now hold with the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB), a multilateral development bank with an exclusively social mandate, is as Technical Advisor responsible for a cross-sectoral portfolio of approximately 15 projects with a loan value of almost €1 billion and a total project value of about €2 billion. My sector-specific responsibility is for the CEB’s Judicial Infrastructure projects which aim to improve prison living conditions, often in pre-accession countries such as Bosnia & Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia and Moldova. Working in this sector requires a firm understanding of international standard minimum prison rules and recommendations, typically produced by the UN and the Council of Europe, and distilling judgments of the European Court of Human Rights to determine leading practices in this sector. Additionally, I work closely with the CEB’s procurement department and advise internal and external clients on specific aspects relating to the FIDIC conditions of contract for construction. Altogether, this is for me a perfect combination of involvement in the technical, managerial and legal aspects of complex infrastructure projects in an international financial institution. I find the skills gained in my legal education to be a distinct advantage every day!

If I compare what I was doing before my PhD to what I am doing now, the difference is immeasurable. My time at UL was transformational; it opened me up to new opportunities, new ways of thinking, and ultimately a whole new life in Paris. I have many lasting memories of my time in UL, but my undoubted highlight was the very special day where both my wife and I graduated together with our PhDs.
I had recently completed the LLB in Law and European Studies at UL where criminal law was my favourite module and the subject I chose for my dissertation.

Above all else, I wanted to keep my options open from a career perspective. I was attracted to the LLM for two reasons in particular. Firstly, the course structure was discussion-oriented and its core modules varied and interesting. Secondly, the course was more assignment and essay focussed than exam focussed. I felt the course would enhance my research, analytical and communication skills.

The subject area, the teaching and the open nature of the course provided for a very different educational experience. Overall, I felt the smaller classes were more active, engaging and thought-provoking. This contributed greatly to preparation for my subsequent career.

I particularly enjoyed the European aspect of the course. Upon graduating, I undertook an internship with the European Parliaments Legal Affairs Committee and have since pursued a career in Brussels. The LLM gave me a solid grounding in the skills I use on a day-to-day basis in a fast-paced and challenging environment.
I’ll be honest. I didn’t really have a clue when I was filling out my CAO form what I wanted to do. I liked a range of subjects and I could see myself doing lots of different things. One thing I loved most though, was sport. One visit to the sporting campus at the University of Limerick and that sealed the deal.

Another passion was writing and the study of English. These seemed to fit in well with the study of law and when I analysed the course details I saw that Sport and the Law was an option in year three. Law and European Studies, as the course was named at the time (now Law Plus), was the beginning of a new path.

Like any course of study, there were areas that lit me alight and others that were a case of simply crossing off. You will always surprise yourself however. Some subjects were a given in terms of fascination factor, like sports law and criminal law. But it was others, like commercial law and tort; I didn’t expect to enjoy these as much as I did.

My thesis was always going to sports law based. When you enjoy something, you will often find that there is never enough time to do all the research that you wish possible. My thesis, entitled ‘Title IX; Development, Debate and Possibilities for Reform’ is still fresh in memory and that has stood to me on a number of occasions in subsequent discussions about equality in sport.

Those discussions have taken place predominantly in the world of journalism which has been a much welcomed side effect of my legal studies. I write a lot about women’s football these days and have been involved in many discussions on radio, and sometimes television, about the promotion of women’s sport.

After completing a postgraduate diploma in sports law (along with various other twists and turns) I have also recently commenced life as a trainee solicitor at William Fry, where sports law is slowly but surely surfacing as its own separate area of specialisation. My love of sport and my time at UL have played a massive part in getting me to this point.
The decision to undertake the Evening LLB at the University of Limerick in 2000 was one of the best I ever made. The first few weeks were daunting: the reading lists seemed incredibly long and the court transcripts seemed dense and opaque. But the fog of fear and confusion quickly lifted when my classmates and I discovered that one of the key skills we would be taught was the ability to pinpoint relevant information, to parse long passages and detailed documents effectively, to quite literally get to the point, and to formulate a cogent case for presentation to a prospective client or court.

I knew that things like contract law and tort and criminal liability would be interesting, but I hadn’t suspected that they’d actually be entertaining – some of the lectures had us on the edges of our seats; others had us applauding at the end, sorry that the class was over. The lecturers were world authorities in their fields, many of them were multiply published in their subjects, and they were all gifted speakers and teachers. I can’t remember a class I didn’t enjoy.

Some of my fellow graduates from the Evening LLB have gone on to qualify as barristers and solicitors; others have completed masters’ programmes and PhDs. The degree gave me a confidence in myself I hadn’t previously possessed: anything seemed possible after I graduated. I’d drastically improved my communication skills, my ability to assess information and to construct and present arguments, my ability to manage projects and to see things to their conclusions. The Evening LLB genuinely improved my life.