

REMEMBERING
DR AONGHUS CHEEVERS

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In the Irish language the word for condolence is ‘comhbhrón’. Directly translated this means ‘joint sadness’. For a long time during the Covid-19 pandemic the restrictions in place in Ireland allowed for only a handful of people to attend funerals, and for those to maintain social distance from one another. The lack of an opportunity to bring people

together in their sadness, to share the burden of loss, to collectively remember and to celebrate the life of a departed friend, neighbour, colleague, or family member was extremely difficult and added to the grief of many. During this time, our colleague Dr Aonghus Cheevers sadly passed away, and it took a full two years for us, in the School of Law and Government at Dublin City University (DCU), to be in a position to safely bring people together to remember and to celebrate his life, and to share the weight of his loss. This we did on Wednesday 6 April 2022, the second anniversary of his death. While it was a sad occasion, there was comfort too in being together, and joy in the memories that we shared.

We were joined by Aonghus’ family, including his wife Emily, his father Harry, many of his close relatives and friends, as well as academic colleagues from University College Dublin, Technological University Dublin and Maynooth University, and colleagues from the NGO sector.

Speakers at the event included the President of DCU, Professor Daire Keogh; Brian Hutchinson from the Sutherland School of Law at University

College Dublin, who supervised Aonghus' PhD thesis entitled 'Mediation in the Irish Civil Justice System—Use and Understanding'; Aonghus' PhD external examiner, Professor Michael Palmer (Emeritus Professor, University of London); Lorraine Lally BL, the Head of the National Register of Mediators Network; Dr Edoardo Celeste, who completed his PhD at the same time as Aonghus, and was also a lecturing colleague at DCU; Charlie Kinsella, a DCU student representative; Fr Séamus McEntee of the DCU Chaplaincy; and Aonghus' father Harry Cheevers.

As Head of the National Register of Mediators Network, Lorraine Lally announced the establishment of an essay competition on mediation which will be run annually in Aonghus' name. Edward Elgar Publishing have presented the DCU library with an inscribed copy of *Comparative Dispute Resolution* (2020), a research handbook in which Aonghus' chapter on voluntarism in the Irish Mediation Act 2017 was posthumously published. As well as this, Aonghus' wife Emily Waszak has been appointed as one of the DCU Visual Artists in Residence for 2022/2023. Through Emily's work we continue our links with Aonghus, and Emily will present a piece of her textile work, as part of her Grief Weaving project, to the School of Law and Government for display in memory of Aonghus.

Aonghus, who was Assistant Professor in Private Law at DCU, was remembered as an emerging scholar of great intellect. He made a significant contribution to the development and understanding of mediation in Ireland. Aonghus was remembered as a loyal friend, to whom one could turn at any time for support and advice. His encouragement of others and his empathy were recalled, along with his great sense of humour and his ability to engage students in class. Mr Cheevers spoke of the comfort that Aonghus' family found in the reflections which students posted online following Aonghus' death. The students spoke about Aonghus as a wonderful lecturer, who created a warm, open environment for them. One said that he 'was not only a fantastic lecturer but a lovely gentleman'. They said that he always cheered them up with his jokes and witty comments, that he was engaging, caring and accommodating.

It was comforting for us all to share our joint sadness in Aonghus' passing, and to hear of the many facets of his life in which he was respected, appreciated and loved. *Suaimhneas síoraí dá anam* (May his soul rest in eternal peace).

About the author

Professor Yvonne Daly's brief bio and her email address may be found on her [DCU webpage](#).