



International Women's Day 2020

#IWD2020 #EachforEqual

International Women's Day (IWD) has occurred for well over a century, with the first IWD gathering in 1911 supported by over a million people. IWD takes place annually on 08 March and is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The Day also marks a call to action for accelerating women's equality.

To mark this year's IWD, and the 50th anniversary of the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), we are celebrating the Society's female Past Presidents. The first female President of the PSI was Thérèse Brady for the 1974/75 term. Thérèse was a founding member of the Society when established in 1970 and went on to be appointed to University College Dublin (UCD) as director of the first postgraduate training programme in clinical psychology in the country. Thérèse was the first of 18 women, to date, to hold the title of PSI President.

Term	President
1974/75	Thérèse Brady
1984/85	Anne O'Connell
1985/86	Margaret McGinley
1987/88	Dympna Walsh
1990/91	Carol McGuinness
1991/92	Hannah McGee

Term	President
1992/93	Anne Halliday
1994/95	Eunice McCarthy
1996/97	Pauline Beegan
1997/98	Joan Tiernan
1998/99	Isolde Blau
1999/00	Gráinne Ní Dhomhnaill

Term	President
2006/07	Suzanne Guerin
2008/09	Rosaleen McElvaney
2010/11	Mary Morrissey
2013/14	Margaret O'Rourke
2016	Anne Davis
2017	Michele Coyle

In paying tribute to PSI's female Past Presidents, we posed a series of questions to a number of those who have held the position since PSI's founding 50 years ago.



Professor Carol McGuinness

(President 1990/91)

Professor Emerita, Queen's University Belfast

What is your fondest memory/most notable achievement from your time as PSI President?

Fond memory - giving a Special Award at the PSI Annual Conference to Professor Martin McHugh (NUI Galway), one of the founding members of PSI.

Career highlight

My research on developing children's learning and thinking influenced the school curriculum in Northern Ireland, such all school children from 4-14 years of age have opportunities to develop their thinking skills (creative thinking, critical thinking) and personal capabilities, such as team working and self-regulation.

Why is it important to you to be a PSI member?

I have always been strongly committed to the role of membership organisations for psychology, both in terms of professional development as well as influencing national policy. I have been active in both the Psychological Society of Ireland and in the British Psychological Society (BPS), particularly in the BPS Northern Ireland Branch.

If there is anything else that you would like to share with us, please feel free!

Around the time I was President of PSI, we moved premises three times - it was a nightmare!!!



Professor Hannah McGee

(President 1991/92)

Dean, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, RCSI

What is your fondest memory/most notable achievement from your time as PSI President?

We worked on challenging societal issues and tried to produce professional statements to contribute to public discourse - e.g. on suicide and termination of pregnancy.

Career highlight

Completing SAVI (Sexual Abuse & Violence in Ireland) in 2002 - the survey of over 3,000 adults provided a first comprehensive overview of these hidden issues in Irish society - and pre-dated so gave a broader context to the many institutional and organisational abuse revelations in the following decade.

Why is it important to you to be a PSI member?

To support the development and success of the discipline in Ireland.

If there is anything else that you would like to share with us, please feel free!

Thank you for asking!



Dr Suzanne Guerin
(President 2006/07)
Head of School, UCD School of Psychology

What is your fondest memory/most notable achievement from your time as PSI President?

Setting up the Student Affairs Group to support student participation in PSI.

Career highlight

In terms of my PSI career, it would be chairing the AGM that voted on the closing of the PSI diplomas. It was important to be respectful of the years of work on, and commitment of members to, the Diploma, but to recognise the changing context of professional training. There was a lot of emotion and strong views in the room and I wanted to ensure a fair and balanced discussion, but ultimately reach a decision.

Why is it important to you to be a PSI member?

To be part of the psychology community (indeed family!!) in Ireland.



Dr Rosaleen McElvaney

(President 2008/09)

Assistant Professor in Psychotherapy, DCU

What is your fondest memory/most notable achievement from your time as PSI President?

Fondest memory: Duet with Professor Ken Brown of NIBPS - *I Got You Babe* - at the NIBPS Conference on the shores of Lough Erne.

Career highlight

The publication of my third book - *Helping children tell about sexual abuse* - which represented for me a culmination of my clinical experience and my research over many years.

Personal life highlight

Becoming a mother.

Why is it important to you to be a PSI member?

It gives me a sense of belonging with other like-minded individuals and groups whose primary professional goal is to make things better for others.

If there is anything else that you would like to share with us, please feel free!

Thank you for the recognition!



Mary C. Morrissey
(President 2010/11)
Psychology Lead, Research and Evidence,
Health Service Executive

What is your fondest memory/most notable achievement from your time as PSI President?

Being interviewed in 2010 by Kathryn Thomas on RTÉ Radio 1 about the PSI's '40 (practical) tips for mental health, well-being and prosperity'.

Career highlight

Being tasked with the establishment of the Regional Service for Children on the Autistic Spectrum for Dublin and the design of the headquarter premises. I am particularly proud to be one of the founder members of the Psychologists in Diabetes Group, and to have worked on the group's recent policy brief to the Minister of Health to increase access to psychological services for patients with diabetes.

Personal life highlight

Presenting a series of my pictures at photographic exhibitions in 2008 and posting daily photos with a rhyming couplet on Instagram last year.

Why is it important to you to be a PSI member?

In order to connect and keep up to date with issues in the psychology profession. I enjoy the sense of shared identity. Being part of a professional group provides the opportunity to contribute that voice nationally and internationally. I appreciate the psychologists' ethos advocated by PSI of applying research and evidence in practice for the ultimate benefit of service users and patients and wider public.

If there is anything else that you would like to share with us, please feel free!

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute. Many thanks to our inspiring and visionary founders. Congratulations to 2020 PSI President Mark Smyth, all of PSI Council and PSI Members on the 50th anniversary of the Psychological Society of Ireland. Let's celebrate!



Dr Anne Davis (President 2016)

Counselling Psychologist working at the National Counselling Service

What is your fondest memory/most notable achievement from your time as PSI President?

There were many highlights but two stand out. The first was meeting members at our 'In Conversation' events around Ireland. As psychologists we are a relatively small population stretched across the country and often with busy lives and the opportunities to meet together can be few and far between. The second highlight was the advent of change in opportunities for a wider range of psychologists within the Health Service Executive and, as a result of that, greater employment opportunities within the wider mental health sector.

Why is it important to you to be a PSI member?

PSI is important to me as it gives a voice to the role of psychology in society. I think people engage with the Society differently over the course of their training and practice, but it is good to be able to connect with your community.



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2021 will see PSI being led by Dr Megan Gaffney in her role as PSI President. Speaking on those inspiring women that have come before her, and the International Women's Day initiative, Megan says:

“It is with great pride that I look forward to following a long line of capable women who have dedicated their time to advancing the profession of psychology for the benefit of PSI members, service users, and the wider public.”