

## President-elect Michael D. Higgins

As well as his poetry and his love of Irish arts and the Gaelic language, he is president of Galway United soccer club.

Known affectionately all over Ireland as Michael D, Higgins's achievements include establishing the Irish-language TV station TG4, reinvigorating the Irish film industry, ending the section 31 censorship regime that barred Sinn Féin from the Republic's airwaves, and overseeing investment in public museums.

His elevation to the highest post in the land will delight the arts and sports communities in Ireland. Former UK and Irish chart-toppers the Saw Doctors joined him on the hustings during the campaign, urging people to vote for him. The band once dedicated a song to him called Michael D Rocking in the Dáil Bar. Among others to back him for the presidency was the Hollywood star Martin Sheen, who described Higgins as a "dear friend".

He is a recipient of the Seán MacBride international peace prize, campaigned against the Iraq war and spoke up for the victims of regimes in Pinochet's Chile and in Cambodia.

Born in poverty in Limerick city, Higgins was the first of his family to go to university and eventually pursued a career as a politics lecturer at University College Galway, and Southern Illinois University in the United States. Although originally a member of Fianna Fáil, Higgins switched to Labour in the late 1960s and has fought elections for the party since 1969. He is married with four children.