

# Tributes paid following death of civil rights campaigner Melaugh

**T**RIBUTES have poured in for veteran civil rights campaigner Eamon Melaugh, who has died aged 92.

Mr Melaugh was a lifelong socialist activist who played a pivotal role in the north's civil rights movement during some of the most turbulent years in Derry's history.

Forced to leave school at 14 during the Depression, he spent years seeking work in Scotland and England before returning to marry May McLaughlin in 1956 and settling in Creggan in 1961.

Confronting Derry's severe unemployment and housing crisis in the 1960s, Mr Melaugh co-founded the Derry Housing Action Committee and Derry Unemployment Action Committee. With Eamonn McCann, he organised the civil rights march of October 5 1968 that was violently stopped by the RUC.

He was also known as the voice

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of Radio Free Derry which broadcast during the Battle of the Bogside in August 1969.

He witnessed Bloody Sunday in 1972 and remained active in community politics, later joining the Workers' Party and helping many people from disadvantaged backgrounds in Derry, across Ireland and elsewhere including India.

He and May raised four daughters and seven sons before fostering 15 children.

He will be remembered by many for his commitment to non-violent direct action, social justice and helping others.

SDLP MLA Mark H Durkan told The Irish News that Mr Melaugh will be remembered for his "quiet kindness" in helping the disadvantaged.

"I'm very saddened to learn of Eamonn's passing," he said.

"He was a real gentleman, I had many dealings with him over the years. He was well known and will be remembered for his work with civil rights, human rights and for helping disadvantaged people in Derry, Ireland and abroad.

"His charity and compassion for those less well off wasn't limited to the city boundaries or these shores.

"There have been countless benefactors of his generosity and kindness, his quiet kindness over the years.

"He'd have come to us about people in need, not necessarily looking for money, but for help with housing and all sorts of other issues.

"But never looking for help for himself, he was always looking to get other people help that they needed.

"My sympathy with his family and many friends."



Civil rights campaigner Eamon Melaugh has died at the age of 92

A death notice posted online said Mr Melaugh "passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his loving family, aged 92 years. Sadly missed by all his extended family

and friends."

Mr Melaugh's funeral mass is due to take place tomorrow morning at 10am in St Columba's Church, Longtower.