

1. Mark

Thank you everyone for joining us today to celebrate the life of our kind and gentle father, John Pascal Joseph O'Shea. Dad was a man of simple pleasures who liked to laugh, listen to music and take care of animals.

He was born in Cork in 1932 and was the youngest of 7 children. He was a keen sportsman and a gifted fencer reaching the lofty heights of Junior Irish Open Champion. He had the opportunity to fence at the Helsinki Olympics in 1952 but it was too expensive and he was unable to go. At one point in his life, he even entertained the idea of becoming a priest and began attending seminary college. All we know is that priest school didn't work out and soon he found himself in London in the swinging 60s.

2. Fiona

Dad trained in Cork as a dental technician and continued this profession in London, in the prestigious Wimpole Street, Marylebone. He was

employed in a basement laboratory, in conditions akin to a volcano, and worked long hours making dentures for the well-to-do and the odd celebrity. It was at this time that Dad met a group of ladies who were living in a flat share in Manchester Street. Being the handsome man that he was he took each of these ladies on dates until, an Australian brunette nurse called Kathleen, caught his attention.

3. Mark

Dad's first date with Mum was on the lake at Regents Park. On page 14 you'll find a lovely photo documenting this auspicious occasion. The problem was that Mum was quite popular too, and this was her third date that day. Let's just say that Dad was enamored by Mum and six weeks later he dropped to one knee and proposed to her.

4. Fiona

Unfortunately, Dad was a bit slow at organising things and two years later they had still not tied the knot. Mum issued Dad with an ultimatum: “Marry me or I’m going back to Australia.” In September 1969 Dad married Mum in a beautiful and intimate ceremony in central London attended by a handful of family and friends. The sad thing was that neither of their parents could be there. Mum’s parents were too far away in Australia, Dad’s mother Winfred had passed away a few years before and Dad’s father Jack had suffered a recent heart attack and was not allowed to travel. Luckily Uncle Frank and Aunty Irene were there to offer support to their baby brother on his wedding day. The story goes that Dad was so nervous about the wedding that he thought saying confession might help. Aunty Irene dropped Dad off at Sacred Heart Church in Kilburn so he could be absolved of his sins before the big ceremony. Dad was late for his own wedding.

5. Mark

I made my entrance into the world in July 1970 and Fiona followed in December 1975. Dad continued working as a dental technician and Mum's health continued to deteriorate. Life was not easy back then for either of them. Dad worked long hours and Mum was in lots of pain, but somehow, they made a difficult situation work. He was devoted to Mum throughout their marriage and was sitting by Mum's bedside at the moment she left this earth for a better life in heaven.

6. Fiona

Dad was an animal lover to the extreme. He loved all animals and could never quite reconcile Tom and Jerry cartoons because he believed mice and cats could be friends if given the chance. My fondest memories of Dad are related to animals. Monty, our first cat, ran away and Dad spent ages scouring the neighbourhood looking for him. Then we moved to Brassey Road and Dad took it upon himself to provide an all-

day buffet service to the cats on the estate (some of whom already had owners). I remember Dad painstakingly cutting up bread cubes and oven roasting them with chicken fat for the many urban foxes that prowled the streets. I remember Dad buying bird seed by the 20kg sack to feed the pigeons, and I remember Dad taking the cats, like the Pied Piper, down to the petrol station late at night to buy cigarettes. When we got our dog, Pebbles, he found out that she and her best friend Lady, loved Polo Mints. Dad would line the mints up on the wall outside Lady's house so she would have a treat the moment she went for a walk.

7. Mark

Dad was also very community minded. He was on many local committees with Mum, and did his best to make the area a safe and inclusive place for all. He was a life-long member of the Labour Party and would proudly display their posters during the run up to local or

general elections. He always thought he could make a difference and always cared about people who had fallen on hard times.

8. Fiona

There are many funny stories about Dad, like the time he dropped me off at school and split his pants open as he kissed me goodbye. Or the time when he was caught making a dash down the hall in his underwear at the same time Mark decided to bring his friend home. Dad was forced to hide behind the fridge in the kitchen for ages, until Mark's friend left. I remember Dad missing half of the only family holiday we ever had because he hopped on the wrong coach and ended up in Manchester instead of Stratford-Upon-Avon. Mark remembers the time when Dad waved him off on a school trip with so much enthusiasm that he didn't notice the approaching lamppost and walked smack into it. Like the joker he was he pretended he had meant to do it. To Mum's great annoyance he often beat her at Scabble and after

Mum's passing he started playing Scrabble with the cat. On page 25 you'll find the evidence.

9. Mark

We remember Dad as being a kind and gentle soul who had an inbuilt need to help anyone. He often walked people home after meetings, would chat to people who might be lonely and would always make people feel like he cared. Fiona will miss him calling her Diddle-die-bows and I will miss him calling me, Marky. We will miss Dad telling us how proud he was of us. We will miss his forgiving nature, and his sense of humour. We will miss his patience and positive outlook on the world.

10. Fiona

In his life time Dad obtained many names: Dad, John, Johnny, Francis of Assisi, and Nero. Mum named him Nero because of his incredibly sever

DIY haircuts and Francis of Assisi due to his love of animals. But to us John was simply Dad. He was there for us no matter what time of day it was, was happy to hear our stories and was pleased when life was going well for us.

11. Fiona

In his later years Dad changed due to two nasty strokes. The twinkle in his blue eyes faded and his ability to follow a conversation diminished. He was happy to sit and listen to Irish folk music, military bands and wartime classics like Vera Lynn, but remembering details of the past was too difficult. Dad was very lucky that Mark gave up his life in Bradford to look after Dad after Mum passed away in 2019. I think Mark's constant companionship brought great happiness to Dad as he approached the end. He loved listening to Simone play the guitar and the flute, and was appreciative of her skills as his own personal hairdresser. He enjoyed Mark's cooking and seemed more accepting of

what he called “rabbit food” towards the end.

12. Mark

Our final trip as a family of three was to Cork in 2020, and it was especially memorable. Visiting the River Lee, The Blarney Castle and Dad’s childhood home, Shrewsbury Villas, was incredible. Dad had not been back to the Emerald Isle for over 50 years and he was treated like a celebrity by the family and friends we caught up with. He was the guest of honour at every family gathering that weekend and he loved it. With Dad’s passing it marks the end of a generation.

13. Fiona

Dad, we love you very much and we will miss you always. You have instilled in both Mark and I the meaning of loyalty and compassion; the need to be forgiving and the importance of a sense of humour when life goes pear-shaped. I hope you and Mum will be happy in heaven and

you will be reunited with all your departed family members, friends and beloved pets.

14. Both

As Dad would say, "I'm not perfect but I'm more perfect than most."

Rest in peace Dad.