

Farewell Message from Ambassador Declan Kelly

I was first posted to Canada in 1985 at which time I was the First Secretary in the Embassy. I worked with two Ambassadors, Edward Brennan the late Sean Gaynor. Anne and I were accompanied by our three children, Ruth, Declan and Richard all of whom attended five years of school in Canada at various levels.

It was my first overseas posting and we arrived here after my stint as Private Secretary to the then Taoiseach, Dr. Garret Fitzgerald.

As a family we really embraced life in Canada and tried to sample as much as we could of the Canadian experience. Among other things we skated on the Rideau Canal, skied at Camp Fortune, brought the kids to the sugar shacks to see the maple syrup being tapped. The latter clearly had a big impact on them as to this day they still ask us to bring them home Canadian Maple Syrup. I am delighted to say that our three year old granddaughter, Isabelle, is the latest recruit to the Maple leaf fan club!

Some readers may recall me mentioning in speeches over the years that I bought a camper in which one year we all travelled from Ottawa to the Rockies and the following year from Ottawa to Prince Edward Island. Both these memorable trips left us all with abiding and happy memories of life in Canada when we left in 1990.

Thus it was with great delight that I heard the news in 2006 that I was to be appointed Ambassador to Canada. Anne and I were thrilled with the news that we were returning to a place which held so many happy memories for us.

As we prepare to leave Canada, for the second time at the end of July, to take up our new posting in Malaysia, we can again look back on four years of personal and professional fulfilment.

Because the children were not with us on this occasion Anne has been able to accompany me on my official visits which have made the posting extra special for us both. She is, and always has been, a great asset to me and a wonderful Ambassador in her own right for Ireland.

We have really enjoyed our many meetings with the cultural, sporting, academic, musical, commercial and charitable organisations throughout Canada. We thank them all for the warm welcome which they always extended to us on our visits. I also want to express my deep appreciation for the dedicated work of the committee members and volunteers in each of the organisations.

With the assistance of my wonderful staff in Ottawa, I have tried to involve the Embassy in the life of the Irish in Canada as much as possible. To further develop the already thriving commercial relationship between Ireland and Canada, the Embassy has worked with the local communities in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Ottawa to establish Chambers of Commerce to add to the existing chambers in Toronto and Montreal. These new Chambers will provide new opportunities for networking which in turn will increase the profile of Ireland in Canada. I would also like to place on record my deep appreciation for the work of Enterprise Ireland, Tourism Ireland and Bord Bia in Canada. It has been a pleasure working with each of their representatives.

Anne and I will leave Canada at the end of July. I expect to take up my position in Malaysia in early September. We will take with us many happy memories of our second posting in Canada.

Declan Kelly, Ambassador