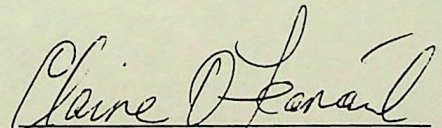


# FORUM FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS HELD AT DUBLIN CASTLE ON  
FRIDAY, 30 JUNE, 1995 AT 12.00 P.M.

Chairperson: Judge Catherine McGuinness

I hereby certify the following to be a true and accurate transcript of my shorthand notes of the above-named proceedings.



Doyle Court Reporters,  
2 Arran Quay,  
Dublin 7.

Telephone: 8722833  
2862097 (after hours)  
Fax: 8724486

MR. SEAMUS CLOSE: Might I commence by offering on behalf of the Alliance Party to Joan and Gordon's daughter and the entire family circle, our deepest sympathy and hope and pray that Joan and the family circle will find that same strength through prayer to God to carry them through the immediate days and into the future.

Senator Gordon Wilson was the personification of Christian humanity. In many ways, as he would often remind us with that twinkling eye, he was a simple man, a man who told us on the opening day of this Forum that while, and I quote, "I might be said to have no representative role from any participant grouping. I can represent the ordinary people of people of this land, both in North and South, who are weary of conflict and are crying out for peace".

But Gordon, while he was a simple man, he was also in many, many ways a very, very complex man. A man whose quiet dignity, whose pleasant being, whose giant stride made him something of a colossus and in my opinion he certainly was one of the wonders of this land.

He had a simple straightforward way with words and that made him an extremely superb communicator. He showed us all how to cope with sorrow, how to cope with tragedy, but most importantly, he demonstrated to us all, day and daily, how to live forgiveness.

But in showing us these qualities, these virtues which were so admirably packaged in Gordon Wilson, the person, I feel that he was also challenging us all to recognize that love, that compassion, forgiveness, peace, reconciliation, etc., are not the virtues of the weak but rather are the standards of the strong and the standards of the victorious. As Martin Luther King once said "Surely I defeat my enemy when I make him my friend".

As we all know, Gordon Wilson had countless friends. In 1987 after the death of his daughter Marie he briefly questioned why Marie and not him? Because, as he said, he had had a fair innings, but then quickly he answered his own question, "maybe it's part of a bigger plan, God's plan".

I believe that Gordon, in his pursuit of peace and reconciliation, has completed his role in that plan and it's now being rewarded by again being with Marie and Peter, but our continuing role in that plan is to ensure that his work is never undone. I believe that we have got to ensure that the peace, the reconciliation for which he strived, will be maintained and strengthened throughout this land through the spirit of forgiveness for which he lived.

I considered it an honour, I considered it a privilege to have known Gordon Wilson. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much. I go on now to Seamus Lynch of