



QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST

LEGACY NEWS
SPRING / SUMMER 2025

180 YEARS AND BEYOND

As we celebrate the 180th anniversary of Queen's, we're looking back at all that has been achieved since its beginnings in 1845, but we're also looking to the future, to our next 180 years.

The power and significance of gifts in Wills in planning for our future is clear: gifts pledged today will support our students and the important work of the University for decades to come.

A great example of this is the recently launched Northern Ireland Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Research Hub – a first in Northern Ireland. This project only became a reality thanks to funding from the MS Society and a gift in a Will from the late Professor Dame Ingrid Allen, a global pioneer in MS research at Queen's.

This summer, we'll mark our 180th graduation season where we'll celebrate the Class of 2025. This will include the many deserving graduates who benefitted from bursaries, scholarships and prizes funded by gifts in Wills and lifetime gifts; graduates who will then carry that spirit of philanthropy with them wherever their lives might lead.

In this newsletter you can read more about the enormous impact legacy gifts can have on our students and staff, and why our pledgers are motivated to give.

If you have left a gift in your Will to Queen's or are considering doing so, thank you. Thank you for showing your belief in our University and what we can do together. Each and every gift is an investment in the future of education and research in Northern Ireland and beyond.



[Signature]
Professor Sir Ian Greer
President and Vice-Chancellor

CONTACT US

If you have any questions about leaving a gift in your Will to Queen's, or how your gift can help, please contact our Legacy Manager, Louise Carey, at L.Carey@qub.ac.uk or on +44 (0) 7747 234 282.



Pictured L-R: Prof Denise Fitzgerald, Stewart Finn, MS Society Northern Ireland, Caroline Millar, MS patient and Dr Emma Gray, MS Society. Dame Ingrid Allen's portrait is seen directly above the group.

LAUNCH OF NI MS RESEARCH HUB

This April, Queen's launched The Northern Ireland Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Research Hub – a facility which will allow for the development of a large-scale programme of MS research in Northern Ireland.

This ambitious project became a reality thanks to funding from the MS Society and a legacy gift from the late Professor Dame Ingrid Allen, a global pioneer in MS research at Queen's and an inspiration to the research team.

Northern Ireland has one of the highest rates of MS in the world, with more than 5,300 people living with the condition. It's a neurological condition that is often painful, exhausting and can cause problems with how people walk, move, see, think and feel.

Research at the Hub will build upon previous findings which show that in MS, the retina (the back of the eye) can become inflamed and lose nerve cells. Scanning the retina could provide faster, simpler ways to monitor how MS

progresses, and how people with MS respond to treatments.

Professor Denise Fitzgerald, Principal Investigator and researcher at Queen's explains: "This unprecedented opportunity to grow MS research in Northern Ireland is a team effort on all fronts – funders, researchers and people with MS all working together to tackle MS.

"We are leveraging Northern Ireland's strengths in eye research and exciting innovations in healthcare and research to drive forward globally leading research to improve the lives of people affected by MS."

Dr Emma Gray, Director of Research at the MS Society, says: "We are proud to be supporting the Northern Ireland MS Research Hub. The Hub will build capacity in MS research in Northern Ireland, bringing together researchers, doctors and the MS community to accelerate research and help stop MS."

HOW TO DIE TIDILY WEBINAR

In March, we hosted our first-ever *How to Die Tidily* webinar as part of Free Wills Month, designed to offer our alumni and friends clear, practical advice to make sure everything is in place when it matters most.

Led by Sheena Grattan, Honorary Senior Lecturer at Queen's & Barrister at Law TEP, and Professor Heather Conway, School of Law at Queen's University, the session brought us up to speed on the practicalities of Wills, power of attorney and end-of-life arrangements to make things simpler for those we leave behind.

Thanks to its success, we plan to host more events on similar topics. If you have a suggestion for a future session we'd love to hear from you. Keep an eye out for future dates.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

ANNUAL MEETING OF CONVOCATION 2025

When: 12/07/25, 6-8 PM

Where: The Great Hall,
Queen's University

MEDICINE CLASS OF 1990 REUNION

When: 7/06/25, 7 PM

Where: The Titanic Hotel, Belfast

SCHOOL OF CHEMISTRY AND CHEMICAL ENGINEERING REUNION

When: 4/07/25, 12-7 PM

Where: Riddel Hall,
Queen's University

MEDICINE CLASS OF 2000 REUNION

When: 20/09/25, 7 PM

Where: Great Hall,
Queen's University

To find out more visit

go.qub.ac.uk/alumni-events

DR KIERAN AND MARIE MCGEOWN

Both my wife and I have a deep understanding of the positive impact that quality education can have on students and the future opportunities it can offer, as well as the benefits to society at large. While I came to teaching a little later in life, Marie spent her whole career teaching Art & Design and Drama to post primary students. We've both been lucky enough to witness first-hand the impact that education can have on young people.

But education doesn't just have an impact on very young people. I spent my 20s working in South Africa as a marine electronics engineer and very much enjoyed my time there. However, it was

when I returned home to Northern Ireland and undertook numerous qualifications in my later years, including a doctorate in Education at Queen's, that both our professional lives followed a path within the education sector.

My qualifications helped to secure a new career in teacher education at St Mary's University College and beyond. This allowed me to travel the world, teaching and learning, meeting like-minded people along the way. I believe that education was the vehicle that encouraged and enabled me to have a more complete appreciation of both freedom of thought and expression.

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Throughout their teaching careers, it was Kieran and Marie's hope that they could make a difference to the lives of their students. By choosing to leave a gift in their Will to Queen's to create bursaries in honour of their lost loved ones, they will continue to make a significant difference to students in the academic fields of both Drama and in Engineering.

GWYNETH MACAULAY

I graduated from Queen's with a law degree (LLB) in the Class of '72. When I attended university, students didn't pay tuition fees and I was fortunate enough to receive a full maintenance grant during my studies, so I had no worries about repaying a student loan after graduating. I'm aware the situation is significantly different for students today, so as a way to give

back, I have left a gift in my Will to support students who need some financial assistance.

I was brought up in the London Borough of Croydon so perhaps Queen's wasn't an obvious first choice, but it had a fine reputation and was far from home. I was keen to live independently from my family and was excited at the prospect of living in an entirely new part of the British Isles, making new friends and settling into academic life.

I didn't know about the religious tensions in Northern Ireland when I applied in 1968 and although my time at Queen's coincided with some of the worst years of the Troubles, fortunately it didn't affect my life as an undergraduate at the University. I felt like we were in a

sort of bubble. It didn't matter what your background was.

I loved the independence I discovered at Queen's: sharing a flat with new people from different backgrounds, throwing parties, making new friends and sharing new ideas. I have such fond memories of walking through the beautiful Quad and the Lanyon Building, rowing on the River Lagan and working in the old library.

When I returned to London, my degree proved to be the stepping stone that I needed to carve out a successful career as a corporate finance solicitor, and progress to becoming a partner in more than one law firm in the city. I'll forever be grateful for the education I received at Queen's and the opportunities it afforded me.

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Making a charitable gift in your Will is not only an amazing way to support the charities you value, but it can also reduce the inheritance tax (IHT) paid on your estate when you die. In the UK the first £325,000 of an estate is generally exempt from IHT (the nil-rate band), with a 40% tax normally charged on any amount above that threshold. However, if an individual donates 10% of the estate's net value to charity, the IHT rate is reduced from 40% to 36%.

What's changing?

The current IHT threshold of £325,000 has been extended until 2030. This amount has remained unchanged since 2009, even though estate values have increased (particularly estates which include properties). As a result, while the threshold stays the same, more

estates are likely to be subject to IHT as inflation and property prices push up estate values.

Pension wealth will be included in estate calculations. From April 2027, unused pension funds and death benefits will be included in a person's estate for IHT purposes. This is a major change from the current system where pensions are considered separate from Wills. Some of the details of how this will be implemented remains unclear, but this change is expected to further increase the number of estates that could be eligible for IHT due to an increase in overall estate values.

Agricultural Property Relief will be restricted. Currently, farmland and related buildings can qualify for 100% relief from IHT. The new rules to

be implemented from 6 April 2026 will cap this relief at £1 million per estate. Any excess will be taxed at 20% (half the standard IHT rate). This change will affect larger farming estates and may have a significant impact on some farming families aiming to pass their land to the next generation.

Currently, about 4% of estates pay IHT. Due to these changes, the Office for Budget Responsibility has projected that this will increase to 9.5% in 2030. If you believe your estate value may be close to the nil-rate band threshold, it may be useful for you to consult a professional to ascertain how the changes may affect you and your estate.

To find out more visit:
gov.uk/inheritance-tax

FREE WILLS SERVICE

Did you know that as an alumni or friend of Queen's, you're eligible for all sorts of support and perks? One of these is a free simple Will-writing service, giving you the advice and guidance you need to sort your Will.

You can do this in person with a local solicitor, over the phone or online. It's completely free and there's no obligation to leave a gift to Queen's. But for those who might choose to do so, there's the added opportunity



to support students and research that changes lives.

To use the service, you must be aged 18+ and a resident of the UK. This service covers the cost of a simple Will, paid for by Queen's at a special rate. If your

Will is more complicated, you may require additional services. If so, the provider will advise you of this and present a no-obligation quote.

To learn more about this service visit go.qub.ac.uk/freewills