

## FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to write the foreword to the inaugural *Irish Judicial Studies Journal*. The Committee for Judicial Studies and the School of Law at the University of Limerick are to be commended for their innovation in bringing this excellent initiative to fruition.

This publication will be a valuable tool for the Judiciary in keeping them informed of developments in a constantly changing and increasingly complex legal environment. The host of engaging articles, cases, commentary and book reviews, will also be of interest to the wider legal community of academics, practitioners and students.

The article by Mr. Justice Peter Charleton, Mr. Ross Pratt-O'Brien and Ms. Emma Libreri on blasphemy brings to the fore an issue of particular interest in Ireland, in light of provision in the Irish Constitution for an offence of blasphemy, and current proposals for reform. In a multicultural European community, the question of the extent to which respect for religious beliefs ought to limit freedom of speech gives rise to much debate.

Of great interest to judges will be the article by Ms. Justice Marie Baker, charting the development of the McKenzie Friend. The article by Niamh Barry BL and Macdara Ó Drisceoil BL on the constitutional right to protest and the 'freemen on the land' movement, reflects the practical changes in the courtroom environment in the aftermath of the economic recession, where the presence of litigants in person has become increasingly prevalent.

Other informative contributions on recent important developments in the law include: a welcome update on Irish sentencing law; a critical assessment on the duty of the District Court judges to give reasons; and a case note and analysis of *D.P.P. v J.C.* [2015] IESC 31.

The commentary on prisoners, media and society is a contribution which is fitting to the memory of Judge Michael Reilly, whose unwavering commitment as Inspector of Prisons to the human rights and dignity of prisoners and their families was a hallmark of his career.

In the realm of legal history, Paul Gallagher SC provides a fascinating account of the career of Daniel O’Connell, who was known as “The Counsellor” long before he was called “The Liberator”, such was his eloquence as a barrister.

Ms. Justice Aileen Donnelly reviews *Northern/Irish Feminist Judgments Judges’ Troubles and the Gendered Politics of Identity*, edited by Mairead Enright, Julie McCandless and Aoife O’Donoghue. This is a thought-provoking contribution to the feminist judgment project, which re-imagines key Irish and Northern Irish cases through a feminist lens.

This is an excellent publication. I congratulate the editor, Professor Raymond J Friel of the School of Law in the University of Limerick, and the Judicial Studies Committee Editorial Board for their hard work in preparing this volume. I wish the publication every success in the future.

**Susan Denham**  
**Chief Justice**  
**Four Courts**  
**Dublin.**

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