

## **Tributes that appeared in the Mercury Newspaper on 26 November 2018**

It has been both an honour and a great privilege to have a younger brother like Paddy. During his 76 years, his boundless energy and extraordinary motivation drove him to strive for finding ways to promote, through ecumenism, a peaceful and non-violent society. In much of this his friend, mentor and model, Archbishop Denis Hurley, set the pace.

It seems to me that to fully understand and participate in his work, we have to examine his legacy. First, he challenges us all within this deeply wounded country to selflessly work for every just and non-violent opportunity. Secondly, his template for this is to work through the combined strength of many faiths. And thirdly, his publications become the rich source for inspiration and sustenance on this difficult path – read his books.

### **Professor Brian Kearney (one of Paddy's two brothers)**

UKZN awarded Paddy Kearney an Honorary Doctorate in Theology in 2009. He had close ties with the university as an outstanding student and a fine lecturer in the Education Faculty in Pietermaritzburg in the 1970s, and later as a Government-nominated representative on the University Council. In his own right his scholarship and meticulous research would have ensured a distinguished academic career had he taken that road. His many publications as author or editor include a biography of Archbishop Denis Hurley, *Guardian of the Light – Renewing the Church, Opposing Apartheid*, described as a 'magisterial work' by Blair Kaiser, Time Magazine's Rome correspondent during the Second Vatican Council. It won the Andrew Murray-Desmond Tutu Award for Best Theological Work in English in 2010.

### **Prof Douglas Irvine**

Emeritus Professor, Political Studies, University of Natal (now UKZN)  
Chair, Justice & Peace Commission, Archdiocese of Durban, 1970 - 1984

It is with shock and sadness that we pay tribute to Paddy Kearney whom we have known for almost 40 years as director of Diakonia, as a leader and as a friend. He was a kind, quiet and softly-spoken person with a warm and generous spirit. He was a dedicated servant of God who demonstrated his love for his people and his country through his selfless service to humanity.

He will be remembered as a fearless fighter for peace, tolerance and democracy. He made sure that the Church in its diverse denominations was firmly on the side of justice for the workers, the poor, the oppressed and the downtrodden supporting their struggles

He was the face of Diakonia that welcomed all who were pursued by apartheid forces, be they detainees or families whose relatives were persecuted or imprisoned or killed. This placed Diakonia at the centre of our struggle for liberation giving protection and inspiration to our resistance against apartheid. He was the glue that held our mass democratic movement civic and faith based organisation to stand together to deliver a combined impact to apartheid.

Working with eminent leaders such as Archbishop Hurley and other leaders of faith, he contributed to keeping the flame of freedom alight, encouraging those who were powerless to fight on, and counselling and supporting those who were brutalised and tortured. Diakonia became a centre for education and a home for campaigns against social ills, the fight against HIV and AIDS, abuse of women and children and domestic violence.

Paddy was a giant who epitomized a non-racial future and unity of our people determined to transform society to usher in a united, caring and compassionate South African nation.

**Dr May Mkhize and Dr Zweli Mkhize (Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs)**

It was with great sadness that the Archdiocese of Durban learnt of the news of the un-timely death of Paddy Kearney. He was a faithful disciple of Jesus and the teaching of Jesus that comes readily to mind when thinking of Paddy is “Blessed are the gentle ...” (Mt 5:5). In his firmness of resolve, Paddy demonstrated what Jesus really meant. Society today thinks of gentleness as a soft virtue which avoids conflict at all costs. But Jesus’ use of the word means first of all to tame what is wild within us and also to be strong enough to carry another’s burden. This is exactly what Paddy was. He practiced his discipleship with courage and conviction, embracing otherness, helping others to carry their burdens and always showing the prophetic dimension of Christian discipleship. He will be sorely missed on the ecumenical and social justice landscape of Durban, as well as in the personal lives of those with whom Paddy worked.

**Rev Fr Sylvester David OMI (Vicar-General: Archdiocese of Durban)**

I salute, respect and thank Paddy for being a dedicated, loyal and selfless person. He played a huge role in my life and in the mass democratic movement. He epitomized the values of a selfless teacher and leader. The lessons and insights from Paddy’s life must be used to teach the current generation and future generations how to build a community based on social justice, inclusion and human rights.

**Eric Apelgren (Head of International and Governance Relations, eThekweni Municipality)**

Paddy Kearney was a proud South African but he was also deeply proud of his Irish roots. Paddy was passionate about the fight for social justice and equality and he was the inspiration and driver behind the Denis Hurley Centre. He was a man of deep faith and an ecumenical leader. Paddy will be sorely missed but he has left us a lasting legacy which we will cherish in our future lives.

**His Excellency Liam MacGhabann (Irish Ambassador to South Africa)**

I am deeply grieved by the sad news of Paddy's passing away. I knew him from the early days when he began to look at how to set up the Diakonia Council of Churches. We had just launched the Natal Indian Congress and my husband Mewa was at the time under house arrest. I had a lot to cope with so I suggested the name of Vish Sewparshad and both Paddy and Vish would discuss the progress with me. Then I was banned and house arrested. With those beginnings, we had many common concerns and worked together on many issues Paddy's wisdom, foresight, spirituality and his gentle compassion will be deeply missed by me and by the Gandhi Development Trust of which he was Chair. Sadly, I am not in the country to pay personal tribute but I am with the family and friends in spirit.

**Ela Gandhi (Founder, Gandhi Development Trust)**

I will always remember Paddy as an astute, passionate and a selfless servant who dedicated his life to transform society. He was the embodiment of ecumenism because he strongly believed that churches have a vital role to play as change agents. Presently, KwaZulu-Natal is the only province that has a vibrant ecumenical footprint in every corner of the province, through Paddy's efforts, an ecumenical icon. Hamba kahle, humble and faithful servant, and join the clouds of witnesses surrounding us.

**Nomabelu Mvambo-Dandala (Director, Diakonia Council of Churches)**

I am orphaned today by the sad demise of my brother Paddy Kearney, an incredible soul and a man of humanity, justice and peace. We shared many platforms of inter-faith prayers and I was proud to be associated with him as he and I were the founders of the Denis Hurley feeding scheme. His patience, care and concern for the poor and destitute were non-negotiable. I pray for his soul to rest in peace and a very, very big vacuum to be filled by his loss.

**AV Mahomed (Chief Trustee , Jumma Musjid)**

Paddy epitomised the Catholic social justice model of 'See, Judge, Act'. He was never afraid to have his eyes open to see the reality of injustice and poverty around him when many of his background might have retreated into a social bubble. He then spent time to judge – to reflect deeply and thoughtfully before coming to a decision. But he would always then act. He may have sat on many committees, commissions and boards but he would ever be happy if the discussions did not lead to concrete action. And not only would he act but he would inspire (and 'gently persuade') others to act as well. In this, he followed in the footsteps of Archbishop Hurley. Now we at the Denis Hurley Centre – and all those whom Paddy influenced in his long and varied life – must follow in his footsteps. But they are big shoes to fill!

**Raymond Perrier (Director, Denis Hurley Centre)**