



Dr. Thomas Frawley

Dr. Tom Frawley is the Assembly Ombudsman and Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints. He is the longest serving Ombudsman since the office was created in 1969.

Born in 1949, Tom moved to Belfast as an eleven year-old from his native Limerick. He studied at St Mary's Grammar School in Belfast and graduated from Trinity College, Dublin in 1971. Following graduation in 1971 he joined the National Health Service and in 1973 he was appointed Unit Administrator at the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald and his career in the health service later took him to North and West Belfast and Lisburn.

In 1981 he became Chief Administrative Officer in the Western Health and Social Services Board, at the age of 31 the youngest person in the UK to be appointed to such a post, and in 1985, following the implementation of the Griffiths Report, he was appointed as the Board's General Manager.

A series of fellowships led to health care study visits to the United States, Australia and New Zealand. In 1994 he headed a Northern Ireland project team which won a competitive tender to advise on the development of the health service system in Zimbabwe. Nearer home he helped to establish a North-South organisation of neighbouring health boards with the aim of mutual help, understanding and shared service development - CAWT.

In June 2002, at the invitation of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, he became the chair of the Panel of Experts that was appointed to support the Review of Public Administration.

In 2003 Tom Frawley received an honorary doctorate from the University of Ulster. The award acknowledged his impressive track record of public service. In September 2006 Tom accepted the honorary award by the University of Ulster of the status and title of Visiting Professor of Leadership attached to the Faculty of Business and Management School of Accounting. In November 2006, Tom was elected as the Vice President of the World Board of the International Ombudsman Institute.

In May 2007 the Standards Committee of the new Assembly invited the Ombudsman to fulfil the role of Interim Commissioner for Standards. In this role he investigates complaints made against Members under the Code of Conduct and submits a Report to the Committee for its consideration. In January 2008 Tom was awarded the CBE by Her Majesty the Queen in her New Years Honours List in recognition of his contribution to public service in Northern Ireland.

In October 2010, Tom was again elected Vice President of the World Board of the International Ombudsman Institute.

Tom has a keen interest in public and current affairs and in sport generally but especially Rugby and Gaelic football both of which he has played in the past. He lives in Derry with his wife Marie and has three grown up children and one grandson, Jack Thomas.