

A Summer School line-up that 'Trumps' previous editions

Bob Shrum, along with Barack Obama speech writer, Cody Kennan and Ian Paisley Jnr have been announced as the headline speakers for this year's Kennedy Summer School which will take place in New Ross from September 7th to 9th.

Cody Keenan will speak about his work writing some of Barack Obama's most memorable speeches on September 8th. During an audio-visually illustrated presentation, Keenan will explore the craft and process of speech writing with a focus on particular speeches he enjoyed writing.

Ian Paisley Jnr, son of the late Reverend Ian Paisley will tell of his political life, his involvement in the peace process and his work on the Northern Ireland Policing Board. He will also reflect on his father's political career and the ultimate decision to enter government with Sinn Féin.

Bob Shrum will reflect on his involvement in Edward Kennedy's 1980 presidential election campaign and his life as a senior Democratic political strategist over five decades.

More than 35 guest speakers have been lined up to participate on a wide range of different subjects and organisers say that Brexit and Ireland's relationship with the US will feature prominently.

The summer school have also gathered a panel of leading historians to assess the legacy of President John F. Kennedy, 100 years on from his birth. Veteran campaign strategist Bob Shrum, who has been central to many US presidential campaigns, will contribute to the debate. There will be a series of public interviews including an audience with RTE's White House correspondent, Caitriona Perry, who gained worldwide attention last week during President Trump's first phone call with Taoiseach Leo Varadkar.

Speaking about the 2017 programme, Summer School co-director, UCG Law Lecturer and American political pundit Larry Donnelly stated: Building on our previous successes the 2017 Summer School moves to a whole new level. Inevitably we have a detailed session on the turbulent Trump Presidency and we are bringing over some of the top U.S. political experts and we are also bringing back Ireland's top correspondent there, Caitriona Perry to try to interpret what is going on and what it means for Ireland."

Said fellow co-director, historian and author Brian Murphy: "Brexit and Budget preparations will dominate Irish politics this autumn and the Kennedy Summer School has gathered a collection of high profile speakers from across the island of Ireland, who along with voices from Brussels and from a cross section of political parties will give their perspectives to date."

For secondary schools students an event focusing on positive mental health will see Niall Breslin speak at St Mary's Secondary School on 'Building Resilience'. He will be joined by Vice President for Public Policy and Communications for Twitter in Europe, the Middle East and Africa and Managing Director of Twitter's operations in Ireland, Sinead McSweeney who will speak about career planning.

A tea party reminiscent of 1963 will take place in the yard of the Kennedy ancestral homestead at Dunganstown with celebrity chef Kevin Dundon, Judge of The Great Irish Bake Off and Chef Paul Kelly along with DIT Assistant Head of Food and Culinary Arts, Mike O'Connor.

The Summer School will close with an audience with 'Late Late Show' host Ryan Tubridy on JFK and more.

Tickets are now on sale from www.kennedysummerschool.ie and St Michael's Theatre in New Ross on 051-421255.