The Presidents of Ireland

The President of Ireland is called An Uachtarain. Aras an Uachtarain was built in 1754, is the official residence of the President, located in the Phoenix Park in Dublin. The Phoenix Park is the largest enclosed city park in Europe, located to the north west of Dublin City center. After the Norman conquest in the 12th century Hugh Tyrell, 1st Baron of Castleknock, granted a large tract of land, including what we now call Phoenix Park, to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. They established an abbey at Kilmainham. King Henry VIII confiscated the property in 1537.

The presidency is open to all citizens of the state who are at least 35. The President is elected by the people once every seven years. In the event of premature vacancy, an election must be held within sixty days. The President of Ireland is neither the nominal nor de facto chief officer of the state, this is vested in the Government. However The Government is obliged, to keep the President informed on matters of domestic and foreign policy.

List of Irish Presidents:


Sean T. O'Kelly  June 1945 - 1959  one of the early leaders of the Irish nationalist Sinn Féin (“We Ourselves”) Party.

Eamon de Valera  June 1959 - 1973  he formed the Fianna Fáil party

Erskine Childers  June 1973 - 1974  he supported Prime Minister Gladstone's 1911 Home Rule proposal. In the Spring of 1914 Padraic Pearse asked Childers to go to Germany and secure arms for use by the Irish Volunters, which he did, in rough seas delivering them at Howth. The guns were not used until Easter Monday, 1916.

Cearbhal O'Dalaigh  June 1974 - 1976  He resigned on 22 October 1976, "to protect the dignity and independence of the presidency as an institution."

Patrick Hillary  June 1976 - 1990  He was Irelands frist European Commissioner in 1973 and became the 6th President of Ireland in 1976.

Mary Robinson  June 1990 - 1997  She resigned the presidency four months ahead of the end of her term of office to take up her post in the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Mary McAleese       June 1997 - Mary was born in Northern Ireland. She grew up Catholic in an area that was mostly Protestant.

Michael T. Higgins   June 2011 - Michael is from Co. Galway