

COLLINS 22 SOCIETY PRESS RELEASE

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THE SEARCH FOR MICHAEL COLLINS IS ON

National fundraising campaign for Michael Collins Documentary launches in Dublin

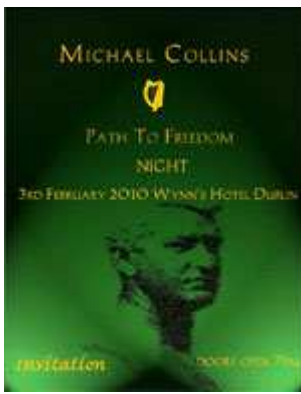
Michael Collins' most ardent admirers will gather in Wynn's Hotel, Dublin, on Wednesday February 3 (7.00pm) to launch the national fund for the Michael Collins Documentary: '*Path To Freedom*'.

'*Path To Freedom*', directed by Noel Duffy, will be the first documentary to span the life and times of Michael Collins since Kenneth Griffith's '*Hang Up Your Brightest Colours*' (1972), and will be the first-ever produced as a feature-length documentary film for theatrical release.

A national search will take place to fill the iconic role of Collins. "The task of casting an actor who can deliver on the complex nuances of Collin's magnetic personality is a challenge I'm looking forward to," said Duffy. Speaking about his decision to hold open auditions in Dublin and Cork at the end of March, Duffy said: "It is important to be as inclusive as possible given the enormous professional, and in some cases very personal, interest being shown in the project."

'*Path To Freedom*' is being produced by S.W.V Studios in association with the Collins 22 Society. "If ever there was a need to remind ourselves of our country's potential – it is now," said Bill Martin, Founding Member and National Organiser of the Collins 22 Society, "It is our intention in making this documentary to honour the men and women who selflessly struggled for Ireland's self determination – and perhaps, in doing so, we too can consider the Ireland we will bequeath to future generations."

Amongst the many supporters behind the project, is the Michael Collins' family, who are being represented at the launch by former Justice Minister, Nora Owen, Grand-Niece of Michael Collins, acting in her official capacity as Patron of the Collins 22 Society. Other speakers include well-known author broadcaster and journalist Mary Kenny, who wrote the much-acclaimed '*Allegiance*'. Originally



written for the stage, *'Allegiance'* deals with the complex relationship between Michael Collins and Winston Churchill, against the backdrop of the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty Negotiations.

The night promises to be historic for the Society, with a stirring event programme of speeches, presentations, live performances and a lifetime award for Denis Lenihan, a Dubliner who has tended the grave of Michael Collins for the past thirty years – as his mother did before him.

The Michael Collins Path To Freedom Night is the first in a series of high-profile fund-raising events planned to run throughout the country in the spring. The next scheduled event will take place in Cork on Monday, March 22, where legendary balladeer and folk singer Johnny McEvoy will perform his poignant tribute to the Big Fella – *'Michael'*.

Castings for the documentary will take place in Cork on March 21. Dublin dates and further details will be published on the Collins 22 Society and S.W.V. Studios websites in early February.

ENDS

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