

PLAY IT AGAIN SAM AS FANS REMEMBER ICON

BY MICHAEL MCHUGH

TRIBUTES have poured in for writer and broadcaster Sam McAughtry who has died at the age of 91 after a long illness.

His works included Play It Again Sam, Blind Spot, Sam McAughtry's Belfast, McAughtry's War and Belfast Stories.

His memoir, On The Outside Looking In, was published in 2003.

A statement from his publisher Blackstaff Press said: "It is with great sorrow that we have learned today of the death of the writer

Author dies at age of 91

and broadcaster Sam McAughtry. He was a much-loved Blackstaff author and we are proud to have published his books, from The Sinking Of The Kenbane Head in 1977, through to his last book, On The Outside Looking In, in 2003.

"His great talent as a writer was his ability to write in a voice that immediately connected with people, because it was direct and sincere and full of emotion, whether it was telling Belfast stories, talking about his life in Tiger's Bay or writing about the death of his

brother. The North Belfast native worked for peace and understanding across Ireland and served as a member of the Irish Seanad."

In his first address to the Upper House in 1996, he said: "I am a hybrid unionist in that I am happy to live in the United Kingdom but I am happier still to be Irish and to proclaim my Irishness."

He helped establish the Peace Train demonstration between Belfast and Dublin and was a trade unionist and member of the Northern

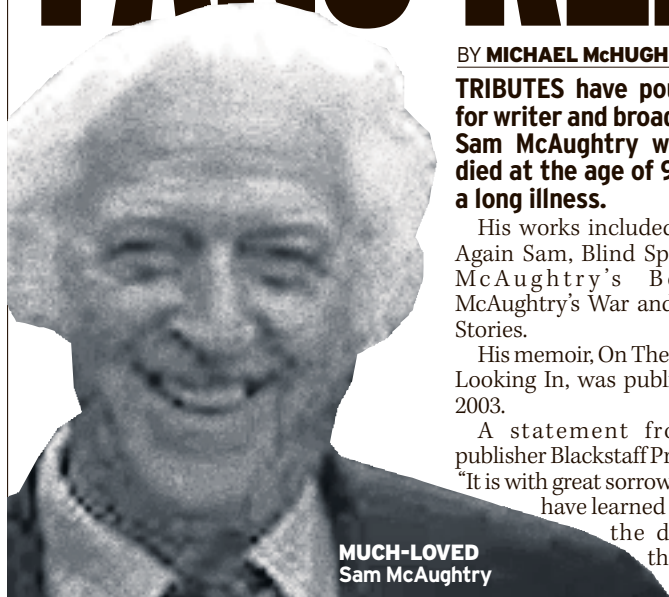
Ireland Labour Party. Born in Belfast in 1923, he joined the RAF and worked as a labourer and civil servant.

Belfast Lord Mayor Mairtin O Muilleoir tweeted: "Saddened to hear of the passing of Belfast scribe and raconteur Sam McAughtry, a son of Tiger's Bay and of Belfast who loved the land of his birth."

Stormont Culture Minister Caral Ni Chuilin said: "Sam's path took him from Tiger's Bay to the Irish Senate, through decades of historic events.

"His artistic contribution served to enrich life, not only in the North, but across Ireland and beyond."

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MUCH-LOVED Sam McAughtry

Coroner to make Arlene probe ruling

A CORONER is to rule on whether an inquest verdict in the case of Arlene Arkinson can point to the involvement of any individual.

John Leckey has asked for lawyers' submissions as he rules on whether the probe, due to start on May 12, into the 15-year-old's death is held before a jury.

Arlene, from Castlederg, Co Tyrone, went missing in August 1994 after a night out at a disco in Co Donegal.

In 2005, child killer Robert Howard, who was the last person seen with her, was found not guilty of murder.

Mr Leckey told Belfast's Coroner's Court the issues around the form of a verdict had potential ramifications for "this inquest and inquests yet to be held".

Inquest plea over killing of IRA men

AN inquest into the deaths of two IRA men killed by an undercover Army unit should examine if detectives treated soldiers charitably, a lawyer said yesterday.

Daniel Doherty, 23, and 19-year-old William Fleming were killed in the grounds of Derry's Gransha Hospital in December 1984.

It was alleged the pair, both from the city, planned to attack an off-duty UDR member when soldiers ambushed them, firing almost 60 shots.

It is understood the SAS and Army's 14th Intelligence Company were involved.

Karen Quinlivan QC said: "I cannot imagine an RUC officer would admit that they are very charitable towards a soldier."

Leather 'used to mask smell of cannabis'

HERBAL cannabis worth up to £450,000 was packed in boxes of leather trousers to disguise its smell, the High Court heard yesterday.

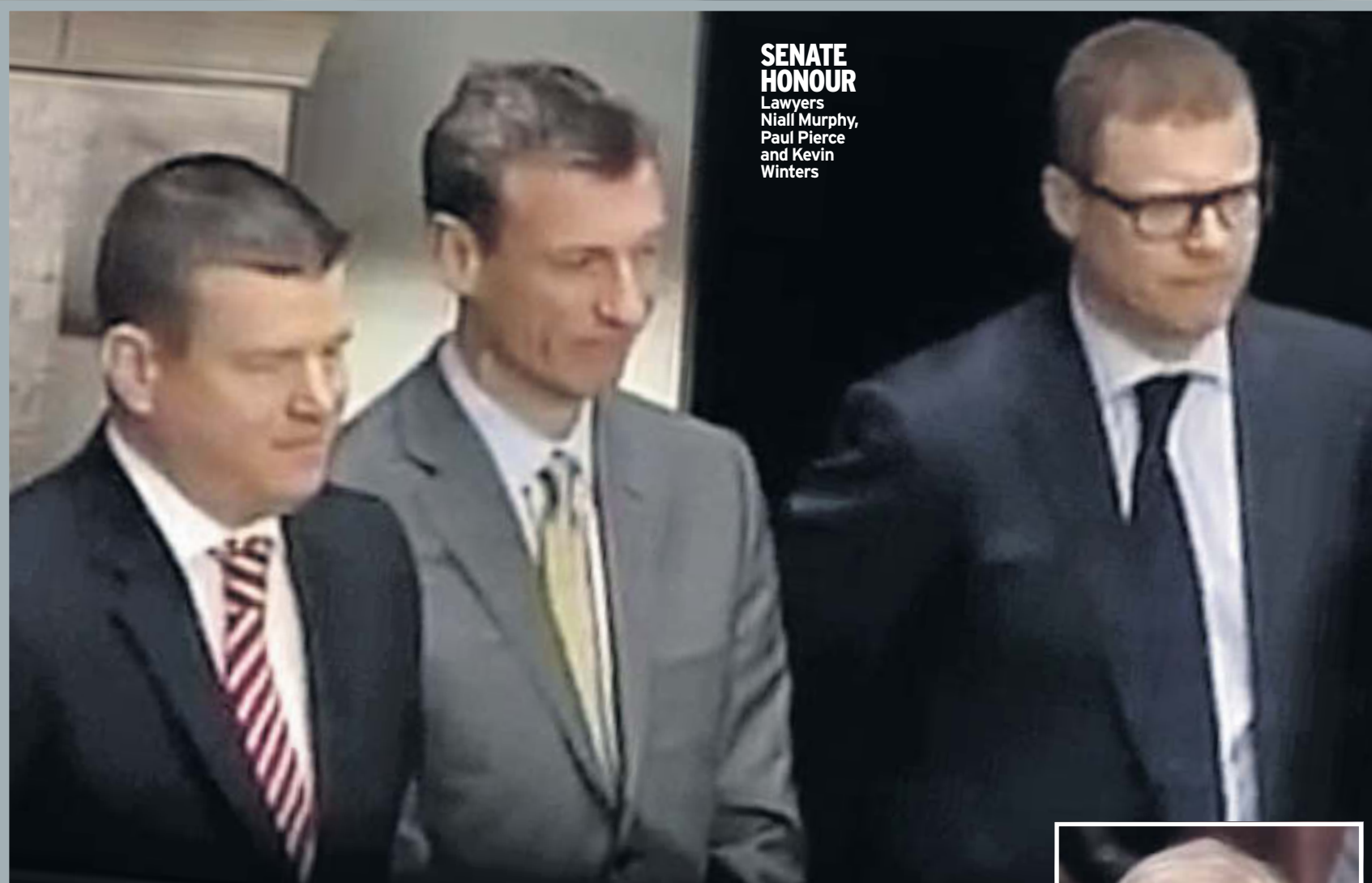
Prosecutors said the drugs were seized following a surveillance operation centred on a house in East Belfast.

Details emerged as a Vietnamese woman was accused of being part of the operation.

Thuy Nguyen, 39, from Orient Gardens, in North Belfast, faces charges of conspiracy to supply cannabis and possession with intent to supply.

The court heard officers found 17kg of herbal cannabis wrapped in cream leather trousers.

Nguyen was refused bail.



SENATE HONOUR
Lawyers
Niall Murphy,
Paul Pierce
and Kevin
Winters

US support for 'brothers in law'

BY MAURICE FITZMAURICE

THREE of Northern Ireland's most high-profile human rights lawyers have been honoured by US lawmakers.

Kevin Winters, Niall Murphy, and Paul Pierce were praised in the New York Senate during a visit that took in law schools and involved meetings with a number of Congressmen and Senators in Washington DC.

Earlier this week they made representations to the Senate and Congress Foreign Relations committees

as well as the US State Department. A film entitled Time For Truth, developed by the Relatives for Justice campaign group, was played at each presentation and the three claim "it made a significant contribution to the discussions that we had".

Mr Winters said: "We are pleased the NYC senate recognised our efforts to litigate on unresolved legacy issues arising from the conflict.

"The failure to implement the Haass proposals on the past means families of all victims across the political and

religious divide still seek closure. Anything that highlights attempts to address that political failing has to be welcomed."

New York State Senator George Maziarz described the three men as "leaders in the struggle for justice in the courts in Northern Ireland".

He praised them in the State Legislature for helping families who have been victims of "State-sponsored violence" to get "proper recognition and reparation from the British Government".



PRAISE New York Senator George Maziarz