

President of Ireland to visit RIT

April 1, 1999

Mary McAleese, eighth president of Ireland, will receive an honorary doctorate of humane letters from RIT May 7 for work promoting peace and commitment to civil rights and the rights of the disabled. McAleese made history by becoming the first person from Northern Ireland to be elected head of state. Her victory in 1997 was by the largest majority ever in Ireland's presidential elections.

President McAleese has extensive background in higher education and the law and a longstanding interest in deaf education. Familiar with sign language through her deaf brother, she introduced a sign-language module into solicitors' training in Northern Ireland, the first such course in European legal training. At RIT McAleese will have the opportunity to tour NTID. McAleese's NTID connection is Michael Schwartz, special assistant to the vice president for NTID, who met McAleese a few years ago when she was Pro Vice Chancellor of Queen's University of Belfast and worked hard to make the university an accessible place for deaf students.

She has a strong track record of involvement in community issues and has experience in the implementation and management of change, particularly in equal opportunities and fair employment. McAleese holds degrees from Queen's University, Belfast; Trinity College, Dublin; and a diploma in Spanish from the Institute of Linguists.

The full April 1 RIT News & Events article can be read at <http://www.rit.edu/~930www/Proj/NewsEvents/>