



QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST

SCHOOL OF
MATHEMATICS
AND PHYSICS



International Women's Day 2022 Theme: #BreakTheBias

International Women's Day provides an opportunity to reinforce the fact that **everyone has a role to play in forging a more gender-balanced world.**

Together we can forge women's equality. Collectively we can all **#BreakTheBias.**

We want to highlight and celebrate the achievement of both female and male Academic-Related and Clerical Staff at the School and how they have an active role in:

- Forming gender parity
- Helping create an environment free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination
- Helping create an environment that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive
- Helping create an environment where difference is valued and celebrated.

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In Memory of Mrs Brenda Morris, CDT Executive Manager

On 9th July 2021 we lost our dear colleague and friend Brenda Morris in her brave battle with cancer. Certainly, no-one would argue otherwise, Brenda was the CDT.

Brenda joined the CDT at the outset of the journey in September 2015 and it is fair to say, was the pivotal and driving force of the team! Brenda created a legacy in the CDT, setting exemplary standards and was immensely respected by all her colleagues throughout the University.

Before creating a new home base within the School, Brenda worked in both the Admissions and Access Office and the School of Nursing and Midwifery. Afterwards, she took up a brave new challenge and a newly created post as Institute Administrator. She was instrumental in establishing a new AHSS Research Institute, The Institute for Collaborative Research in the Humanities (ICRH) and a very successful Doctoral Training Programme (Northern Bridge).

Brenda was far much more than a role model and mentor to staff and students. Yes, she epitomised integrity, professionalism and utter dedication to the University, but best of all, she was an enduringly kind friend who would do anything to support all colleagues.

She was a pillar of strength, committed, loyal, pragmatic and above all else, a fantastic leader and role model for everyone within the centre. Brenda was full of enthusiasm and profoundly committed to the promotion and advancement of everyone in the CDT.

Like many female staff, Brenda balanced a busy and often hectic work life with family life! During her career at Queen's, she successfully raised two sons (Patrick and Conor) and last year, also took on two dogs (Archie and Leo)! The love and loyalty that she had for her family was reflected in her approach to staff and students.

In the words of those who had the privilege to work with Brenda:

Her....pioneering and innovative spirit and her willingness to take on a role for which there were no guidelines or instruction manuals have left an enduring legacy and were responsible for nurturing the successful careers of many early stage and established academics.....we all benefitted from her good sense, her good humour and her selfless and genuine wish to help others succeed.

As Brenda herself said for IWD 2021: *I have been really lucky to have worked with amazing colleagues and students. We really value diversity at the CDT and realise that everyone, staff and student, has a valuable contribution to make in many different ways!*



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The legacy of strong inclusive female leadership continues within the CDT with the appointment of **Mrs Lynda Mahon** as the new **CDT Operations Manager**.

Lynda brings to the School a rich and diverse array of experience and expertise from within Queen's! This is not her first time in a leadership role, as she had not only been the interim for Brenda from January-August 2020, but previously held prominent positions as School Manager, School of English and Administrator of the AHSS DTP for the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. Lynda balances her role alongside also being a mum to two fabulous little people Madeline and Hugo – and cat mummy to Murphy and Marley. Away from work Lynda is a passionate gardener and can often be found out in the field pottering away, destressing!



What does International Women's Day mean to you?

International Women's Day has always been a time for celebration at Queen's and I have been part of many events over the years. I think it is so important to celebrate the success of women across all fields within work.

What have you learned along the way?

I have learned to always try to be kind and bring a positive attitude, and it is also important not to take work too seriously. 😊

Which woman has most inspired you and why?

Throughout my career I have been managed by some absolutely fantastic people, one particular manager really influenced me and her advice always stuck with me 'you never know what is going on in someone's life, so just be kind and understanding'. And my mum, she inspires me, total legend.



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Alina Schilling, Ewald Microscopy Facilities Manager

I have studied Materials Physics for my BSc and MSc at the University of Bucharest, Romania. In 2003 I graduated with a PhD from the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg and the Max Planck Institute Halle, Germany. Postdoctoral studies brought me to the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, USA and later to Queen's University Belfast where I started in 2004. I was awarded the prestigious EPSRC Career Acceleration Fellowship in 2009. My extensive expertise in Materials Sciences developed over 23 years of research and resulted in 46 publications in international journals, 2 book chapters and a patent. Since 2020 I hold the position of the Ewald Microscopy Facilities Manager within the School. In this role I provide specialist expertise to academic users from different departments in QUB and to commercial users. In my care are the electron microscopy labs which include equipment of about £5 Mil.

I have two children (Christian 11 & Clara 15 years old). My husband, Prof. Joerg Schilling, works at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany. Home is in Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland, but also in Halle, Germany, and in Romania where my parents and brother live.

What does International Women's Day mean to you?

To me the International Women's Day is not only a celebration of all women around the world, but a recognition of women's efforts and achievements. In my youth I was inspired and educated by women teachers. Over the years I have worked with many remarkable women in universities all over the world. I could give a long list of women figures who inspired and even mentored me, but the most inspiring woman in my life is my mum -Veronica. She shaped my life in so many ways, she guided me and gave me the roots of responsibility. She never clipped my wings but trusted me to make the right choices and always challenged me to become a better person.

I could not be where I am if it was not for the brilliant women who fought for girls' education and women's rights, who braved and overcame many obstacles in the history to make the world better.



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Tara Spencer, Clerical Officer, School Education Team

I started working in the School in February 1989 – which seems amazing to me. Sometimes it feels a long time ago but in other ways it's flown by! I've enjoyed working with so many different people of many nationalities, in both Maths and Physics, in the areas of teaching and research. I've also been involved in arranging a few conferences over the years – that was always fun!

What does International Women's Day mean to you?

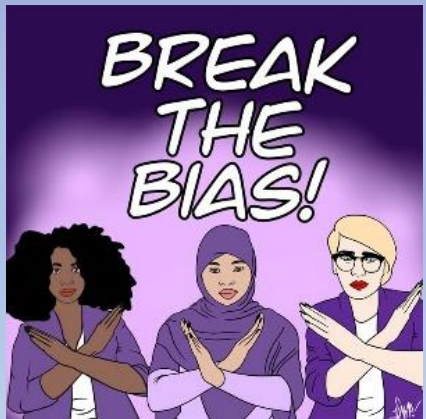
International Women's Day to me means women having the recognition they deserve in the workplace and the freedom to make choices. My very favourite aspect of my work is seeing young students come to us from school, perhaps nervous and not quite sure of their place in the world. I love to see them blossom, grow in confidence and then to see them on graduation day, when they and their loved ones can be so proud of their achievements. It's been a delight to me to see the numbers of female students in the School grow in number over the last three decades. I especially enjoy hearing from them when they've moved on from QUB and have been so happy and successful in their careers, often while being busy mums as well.

What have you learned along the way?

That kindness matters, that it's always more important than the job, and that if someone isn't being particularly helpful you need to remember that you have no idea what else might be going on in their lives – and that their work is only a small aspect of that.

Which woman has most inspired you and why?

I can think of two women at work in particular, and I met both of them when I started working at QUB. The first was Marie Murray – she taught me the importance of kindness. And secondly, Sheila O'Brien – in all the years we worked together we made a great team – we complemented each other in our styles of working, and teamwork was always the best way to get things done! And from both women, I learned the importance of always being able to have a good laugh!



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Michael Briggs, Clerical Officer, School Operations Team

I assist with the General Operations of the School whilst also providing much needed support in areas such as Recruitment, Outreach, Marketing, and Internationalisation.

I have a first-class honours degree in Quantity Surveying and previously worked as a Graduate Quantity Surveyor, A Sales Estimator, a Business owner and a Packaging Technologist.

I'm married to Laura and have a little 1 year old son named Seth. Outside of work I love spending time with family and enjoy football, tennis, golf, puzzles and escape rooms.

What does International Women's Day mean to you?

It's a day where we celebrate the Women in our Society and their achievements.

The Recognition of how women impact our society and the world on a daily basis is very important.

What have you learned along the way?

That the role and achievements of women should never be undermined, nor should there ever be a bias. Women have a crucial role in making this world a better place.

Which woman has most inspired you and why?

My Wife. Laura is such an inspiration to me and others around her yet incredibly humble. Laura graduated from Queens with a Degree in Dentistry. She went on to run a successful business for 4 years in the hospitality sector, Jack Straws the Board Game Café whilst also continuing to develop her professional career in Dentistry.

Whilst owning Jack Straws and in 2017, Laura won the Business woman of the Year Award for "Best New Start up".

Laura has been on a number of mission trips to Romania and Moldova. On Laura's most recent trip to Romania with the Smiles Foundation, Laura used her professional skills in Dentistry to carry out a number of Dental procedures and treatments.



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Gary Hall, Clerical Officer, School Operations Team

I am a QUB alumnus, Graduating in 1996 with a Joint English/History BA Hons degree. I worked in the NI Civil Service for 16 years before starting with the School in 2017. I work in the School Finance Office which means I am in regular contact with lots of different staff and students which I enjoy. I'm married to Leah, I'm Dad to Luke 6 and Stepdad to Caleb 10 and Rigby 14. We have lots of pets, Dexter the Lab who just turned 1, two cats Kylo and Willow, a tarantula and a snake. I enjoy listening to music, reading Sci-Fi books and watching films in my spare time (not much anymore). I am a proud Star Wars geek!

What does International Women's Day mean to you?

It's a day when we recognise the achievements of Women in society and highlight the inequality that still remains.

What have you learned along the way?

I have learned to treat everyone as you yourself would like to be treated. Quite simple really.

What woman has most inspired you and why?

I have a lot of strong women in my family who have helped and supported me throughout my life. I would have to say that my Mum Linda takes the top honour. She's had to deal with a lot of health issues in recent years and she has remained so positive despite her illness – truly one in a million.



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Sam McIlwaine, Clerical Officer, School Operations Team

My QUB bio is very short, in fact it is exactly 5 months short! I am the clerical officer based in the front office of the School and usually the first point of call for any queries and requests. I enjoy this as I come from a customer service background of 20 years and thrive when interacting with people, all people.

My interests outside of the 9-5 include running and politics but not running in politics. One of my interests keeps me sane and the other drives me insane, I will let you work out which is which.

What does International Women's Day mean to you?

IWD to me is a chance to celebrate women in society and the women in my life. We should really be celebrating all year long, but this day and month allows the spotlight to be firmly placed on the achievements, impact and contribution of women, it allows us to promote that which is often overlooked and taken for granted.

What have you learned along the way?

That women face an imbalance in life because of their gender. That the system or society have placed barriers and obstacles in their path that I as a man do not have to face. And from many frank and sometimes uncomfortable conversations with those important women in my life, I have become aware of the prejudice and fear that is placed upon them, this in turn has made me challenge my own behaviour and attitudes. Away from this negativity, I have also learnt that the strongest people in my life are not the men in it, but those women I have been graced with.

Which woman inspired you most?

Two women for this answer! My wife who every day displays an inner strength and integrity that I can only hope to match. And my mother who raised two young boys alone, making sacrifices to ensure her sons never missed out. Both are inspirational to me.

