

## Fintan Kilbride Backgrounder

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Fintan Kilbride was a teacher with the Toronto Catholic District School Board for 17 years. Dedicated to development in Third World countries, he inspired countless students to do the same.



One of eight children, Mr. Kilbride was born in 1927 in Bray, County Wicklow, Ireland. He grew up in Clonmel, County Tipperary, and credited the local church, run by the Franciscan order, with instilling his commitment to social justice at a very young age.

He entered the Congregation of the Holy Spirit in 1944 and taught in Trinidad from 1948 to 1951 where he was recruited to play on Trinidad's national field hockey team. He returned to Ireland and was ordained in 1954.

For 15 years he worked as a missionary in Eastern Nigeria, where he built and staffed 3 high schools and a 50-bed hospital before the fall of Biafra in 1970 ended his work there.

Mr. Kilbride returned to graduate school, and left the priesthood after nearly two decades to marry Kenise Murphy Kilbride in 1973. Together the couple had two daughters, Siobhan and Ciara.

Although he left the priesthood Mr. Kilbride continued working for the poor as a volunteer in places such as Jamaica, Haiti, and Nicaragua.

The family moved to Canada in 1975 and Mr. Kilbride was offered a job at Toronto's Neil McNeil High School. After retiring in 1992, he continued as a substitute teacher until 2003. While at the school he founded a program eventually to be called Students Crossing Borders, which introduces students to the realities of working in developing countries. Each year he took students to work in impoverished neighbourhoods in Kingston, Jamaica; this program continues under the administration of some of its graduates, now professors and teachers who remain committed to the ideals which inspired Fintan.

Fintan Kilbride died December 21, 2006 after a battle with cancer. He was 79.