

[Most Popular](#)[Most Emailed](#)

[Breaking](#)[Sport](#)[Business](#)[World](#)[Gossip](#)



Issue Changer:



[NEWS >](#)

## O'Loan apologises to IRA murder victim's father

By Staff reporter

16/01/2009



MURDERED: Mary Travers with her father Thomas and mother Joan

FORMER police ombudsman Dame Nuala O'Loan has apologised to the father of a school teacher murdered by the IRA after admitting that a report into her murder contained factual inaccuracies.

Mary Travers (23) was shot dead during a murder attempt on her father, Resident Magistrate Tom Travers, as the father and daughter walked home from St Brigid's Church in south Belfast in April 1984.

Mr Travers was himself seriously injured in the attack carried out by two gunmen.

West Belfast woman Mary Ann McArdle (19) was later convicted of the murder after being arrested shortly afterwards and found to be in possession of the two handguns used in the killing.

In 2004 Mr Travers made a complaint to the police ombudsman alleging the RUC had colluded to protect an informer involved in the shooting.

In May 2006 Mr Travers withdrew his complaint as a result of concerns over the ombudsman's investigation.

However, Mrs O'Loan carried on with her investigation and in November 2007 published a report dismissing

Mr Travers's complaint that police had protected an informer involved in the murder of his daughter.

The retired judge, who is now seriously ill, launched legal proceedings against the ombudsman, arguing that his right to confidentiality had been breached after he was publicly identified in the report.

Mr Travers claimed that other serious failings in the report included inaccuracies over the forensic evidence and his daughter's age being incorrectly reported.

He was only made aware that the report was about to be published on the morning of its launch.

Mr Travers's barrister, Frank O'Donoghue QC, told the court: "When he discovered to his horror the content of the statement... criticisms of him over his allegations and factual inaccuracies over the description of his daughter he was extremely hurt and distressed,"

John Larkin QC said the ombudsman expressed "profound regret" at the distress caused to the Travers family by errors contained in the report.

Confirming that the ombudsman had now withdrawn the report in its entirety, Mr Larkin said: "The ombudsman recognises that Mr Travers is a man of the utmost integrity and honesty in his dealings with the Police Ombudsman's Office.

"The police ombudsman apologises to Mr Travers and his family for the publication of his identity within the withdrawn statement and to the press, particularly having regard to the fact that Mr Travers had withdrawn his complaint."


Mr Travers's solicitor, Joe Rice, welcomed the apology to the Travers family.

"My client is satisfied with the outcome and Judge Weatherup's comment in awarding costs against the ombudsman's office illustrates that this case should never have had to come to a court hearing."

n In June 2004 Belfast republican Joe Haughey, who had been charged with Ms Travers's murder but was later acquitted during the trial, publicly denied claims that he had been a police informer.

 Print  back to top

Bookmark:  Delicious  Digg  reddit  Facebook  StumbleUpon

 Email this story

