



## International Women's Day



To celebrate International Women's Day Villiers School is hosting a conference themed 'Break the Bias' on Friday March 4<sup>th</sup> 2022. A series of presentations will be given by inspirational leaders from the areas of business, science, academia, broadcasting, and public service. We are delighted to welcome Dr. Lydia Bracken, Ms. Mamobo-Oghene Ogoro, Dr. Samira Kaissi, Ms. Jessica Egbulam and Mr. Keith Walsh.



Dr Lydia Bracken is the Assistant Dean for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Faculty of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) and a lecturer at the School of Law, University of Limerick (UL). She is a graduate of UCC (BCL, 2010; LLM, 2011; PhD, 2015) and the Honorable Society of King's Inns (Barrister-at-Law, 2012). Lydia also completed a Masters in Teaching, Learning and Scholarship at UL in 2020. Lydia researches in the areas of child and family law, with a particular focus on the legal recognition of 'non-traditional' and 'new' families. Lydia is the author of two books, *Same-Sex Parenting and the Best Interests Principle* (Cambridge University Press, 2020) and *Child Law in Ireland* (Clarus Press, 2018), and has published her research in high-ranking national and international journals. Lydia's research has been influential in guiding national debates on law reform in Ireland and abroad. Lydia is the inaugural course director of both the Graduate Certificate in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and the Bachelor of Arts in Applied Policing and Criminal Justice. She was Director of Clinical Legal Education at the School of Law, UL from 2016 -2019.



Named as one of the 50 people to watch in 2022 by the Irish Independent, Mamobo Ogoro, 25, is a Social Psychology PhD Candidate and Social Entrepreneur. Fuelled by both her personal experience and her academic background in prejudice, intergroup conflict and dual cultural identity. Mamobo is on a personal mission to unify the world! Mamobo is the founder and CEO of Gorm Media, which is a start-up social impact digital media company with a mission to unify communities by having young people use their voice. Gorm's vision is to spark a movement of unity and shared understanding through innovative digital media (namely video content) that captures the stories, nuances, and experiences of those in our diverse community. We believe that common ground can be built through conversations that matter.



Dr. Samira Kaissi is a Lebanese American scientist and entrepreneur. Born in Beirut, Lebanon, she moved to the USA at 18 and graduated with a PhD in Molecular Biology from the University of Southern California. Her thesis was on using viruses to deliver therapeutic genes to patients with severe diseases. For twenty years, Samira lived in California and worked for Beckman Coulter, a global biotechnology company. She helped customers all over the United States use genetic analysis to answer scientific questions. In 2010, she returned to Lebanon as Director of Biomedical Research Development at the American University of Beirut (AUB) where she led the transformation of biomedical research capabilities and medical school facilities at the AUB School of Medicine. Samira was recruited to Limerick in 2017 as site lead for BD, another global American biotech company. The site she managed in Castletroy had more than 200 engineers and scientists doing research and development to make medical instruments for hospitals and laboratories. In 2019, Samira became CEO of a medical device company, Cala Medical, a pre-clinical stage start-up developing a novel blood purification cartridge for the treatment of sepsis. The following year Samira became the CEO of another medical device company, Capri-Medical, which is involved in developing a neuro-stimulation medical device for the treatment of chronic migraine. Currently Samira has the role of 'entrepreneur-in-residence' where she works with American investors to identify promising Irish start-ups. She also consults for university professors who believe that their research can change the world and helps them start their own companies. Although her career spanned many continents and different jobs, Samira currently enjoys working in the innovation sector, developing new medical devices and therapies for difficult diseases. Samira lives in Limerick city with her husband Frank and daughter Sara.



Jessica Egbulam is a past pupil of Villiers School and a third year medical student in Trinity College, Dublin. In 2019, Jessica was nominated Head Girl in Villiers School in recognition of her contribution to school life and ethos during their time in school. This contribution included academic, sporting and community involvement. Jessica completed her Leaving Certificate in 2019 securing the maximum 625 CAO points and received a Trinity Entrance Exhibition Award. Jessica has been a mentor to new incoming first year students through Trinity's S2S programme and is Treasurer of MOVE (Medical Overseas Volunteer Elective) a charity organisation run by medical students from Trinity College Dublin.



Keith Walsh is a radio and tv broadcaster, writer, podcaster and mental health advocate. He was the lead anchor on RTÉ 2FM's Early Morning Breakfast Show 'Banana Republic' for five years and presented on weekends on RTÉ 2FM and weekdays on RTE Gold. He has been critically recognised for his radio work, including a PPI Award and several awards for his work as a script writer for radio advertising. Keith has also lent his talents to the small screen appearing in a variety of roles on RTÉ One, RTÉ Two and Virgin Media. He now presents his own podcast 'The Keith Walsh Podcast'. A three times weekly podcast that endeavours to have real conversations with real people about real life. Topics covered include dealing with mental health issues, the marginalised, the difference between happiness and contentment, life improvement, coping skills, creativity as a solution to life's problems and much more. He presents an online workshop 'Carding with Keith' for adults and kids has just written a play 'Pure Mental' about his experiences with mental health. He lives in Newbridge, Co Kildare, with his wife and their two children.

