

## Alexander, Conel William (O'Donel) Long

by Helen Andrews

Alexander, Conel William (O'Donel) Long (1879–1920), civil engineer and rugby footballer, was born 6 June 1879 in Imlick, Co. Donegal, youngest son of Joseph Alexander, farmer and JP, and his wife Frances Mary Long. Registered at birth as 'Connell William Long', he was educated at Friars School, Bangor, Co. Down, and Foyle College, Derry, before graduating from QCB (BE 1901), and Birmingham University (M.Sc., 1902; Heslop medal, 1906). In 1902 he was assistant to the city engineer of Birmingham. Elected AICE (1904), he was awarded the Miller scholarship (1904), and the James Forrest medal (1904) for his student paper 'Fluid friction in pipe bends' (1904).

Appointed professor of civil engineering at QCC (1906), he occasionally deputised as president. He enthusiastically supported the war effort in 1914–18, and displayed on the civil engineering notice board the condemnation of the 1916 rising by Bishop Denis Kelly (qv) of Ross; when students removed it, he threatened to deny them testimonials. Apparently critical of the role of religion in institutional life, on applying for the chair in civil engineering he enquired whether consideration was given to a candidate's religious beliefs and whether it was 'desirable that the professor of civil engineering should, in addition to other professional qualifications, be a member of the Roman Catholic church'; in his will, he stipulated that none of his estate should be left to any institution 'under clerical domination' (Murphy, *College*, 418, n. 182). He was dean of the faculty of engineering (1909) and member of the board of studies (1909–20), NUI. In 1913 he was elected a member of the ICEI and awarded the Mullins gold medal for his paper 'The design of water pipes and culverts for maximum efficiency' (*Trans. Inst. Civ. Eng. Ire.*, xxxi (1913), 105–42). A member of the Ulster inter-provincial rugby team (1899, 1900, 1901), he subsequently played for UCC and was appointed president of the Irish Rugby Football Union (1909–10). Alexander died 17 December 1920 at his home, Tyrconel, Cork, and was buried at St Finbarr's cemetery, Cork. He married (1907) Hilda Barbara Bennett; they had two sons and two daughters. The eldest was Conel Hugh O'Donel Alexander (qv).

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GRO; *WWW*; 'Professor Conel William O'Donnell Long Alexander', *Transactions of the Institution of Civil Engineers of Ireland*, xvii (1923), 74–6; *Cork Examiner*, 18 Dec. 1920; J. A. Murphy, *The College: a history of Queen's/ University College Cork, 1845–1995* (1995); Harry Golombek, 'Alexander, (Conel) Hugh (O'Donel)', *DNB*; Institution of Civil Engineers, archives

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