

## **25th Anniversary Reception at U.S. Consulate hosted by Consul General Susan Elliott**

### **BILL SHAW (Director):**

Susan I want to thank you and put on record my appreciation to you and your most recent predecessors – Barbara and Dean – Lorna and staff here for your support and encouragement throughout my 10 years as Director of the 174 Trust.

As we begin to celebrate the historic milestone of a quarter of a century of work in North Belfast, it's fitting that we do so as guests of the US Consul General.

The 174 Trust has many ties with the US (not least my virtual dual nationality!) and of course it gives us another opportunity to pay tribute to the important part played by President's Clinton and Bush and their special envoys in helping, encouraging and 'hand-holding' as our politicians have taken the painfully slow steps towards peace, resulting in a devolved power-sharing Assembly and a whole set of new relationships within these islands.

The Trust's ties with the Consulate go way back – I have it on reliable authority that, having completed the design and construction of Duncairn Presbyterian Church in 1861 the architect William Barre was commissioned in 1864 by Samuel Barbour, a linen thread manufacturer, to design his home - originally known as Clanwilliam House then renamed Danesfort and now the location of the American Consulate.

Throughout the Trust's 25 years volunteers from the US have played key roles in maintaining various activities serving the needs of the New Lodge and North Belfast.

We also have several Mission Partner Churches across the US from Las Vegas, Chicago, New York and Houston, Texas with teams and individuals making regular visits to work with us.

In addition we have a number of very generous American donors who take an active interest in our work and whose contributions have enabled the expansion and development of the work at the Duncairn Complex.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the American Ireland Fund because without their support and backing on a couple of crucial occasions we would probably not be around to celebrate at all...

But we are, thank God – and *all* supporters and donors – and we remain convinced and committed to the work of '***Building Peace and Promoting Reconciliation***'.