

## Sir James Craig

**Born:** 1861  
**President:** 1919-1922  
**Died:** 1933

James Craig was born on 16 October 1861 in Ballylough, County Antrim, the son of Johnston Craig, farmer and steward, and Ellen (née Wallace). Following his education at the Coleraine Academical Institution, he commenced his medical studies at Trinity College Dublin and graduated BA, MB, BCh in 1885. He proceeded to MD and was elected a Fellow of the College of Physicians in 1891.

Craig followed a very active and successful career in medicine both at academic and practice levels, and combined this with a political career at a pivotal time in Irish history. He worked as an Assistant Physician at the National Children's Hospital and the Meath from 1886-92 and was a Visiting Physician at the latter from 1892-1910. During this time, he was a demonstrator in anatomy, and lectured, at the Carmichael College. He also held appointments at Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, Dr Steevens' Hospital and the Cottage Hospital in Drogheda, and was Physician-in-Ordinary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

Craig's main academic appointment was as King's Professor at the School of Physic of Trinity College. He had wide research interests and published papers on a variety of clinical subjects in the British Medical Journal, The Dublin Journal of Medical Science and the Transactions of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland. He was very involved in the College of Physicians being Registrar (1897-1910), Censor and Vice President (1912-14), and then President (1919-21). He was knighted for his contributions to medicine in 1921.

Sir James Craig was elected MP for Dublin University unopposed in 1921 to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dáil. However, he did not take his seat and did not take part in the Anglo-Irish treaty debate. Following ratification of the treaty a general election was called and he was re-elected then, and for five further elections. During his time in the Dáil he took an active interest in public health matters, education and finance. He sponsored legislation on the Irish Hospital Sweepstake which would provide funding for the hospital services into the future. The President of the Dáil in 1933 spoke in the house thus 'Members of the Dáil will have learned with deep regret of the death of Deputy Sir James Craig, who represented the constituency of Dublin University. Until his health began to fail Deputy Sir James Craig was constant in his attendance and assiduous in his attention to the work of the House. His keen interest in matters of public health and his work for the improvement



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of our hospital system demanded the respect of all his colleagues, whilst his relations with his fellow Whips and his contribution to our debates were marked by unfailing courtesy.<sup>1</sup>

Craig married Kathleen Millar in 1906, they had one daughter and three sons, two of whom studied medicine. The Sir James Craig Memorial Prize has been awarded annually in Trinity College Dublin since 1952 to the student who gained first place in medicine.

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<sup>1</sup> *Dail Eireann parliamentary debates; official report, 13 July 1933.*

