

= George Lee (journalist) =

George Lee (born 27 September 1962) is an Irish economist , journalist , television and radio presenter , and former Fine Gael politician . He worked for RTÉ from 1992 to 2009 . He was appointed Economics Editor in 1996 . During his time in RTÉ News and Current Affairs he was named Irish Journalist of the Year for uncovering a major tax evasion and overcharging scandal at National Irish Bank . He has also presented many documentary programmes for RTÉ .

Lee became a Teachta Dála (TD) for the Dublin South constituency in June 2009 , winning a by @-@ election with a 53 @. @ 4 % majority and was referred to as a " celebrity TD " . On 8 February 2010 Lee announced his resignation both from Fine Gael and from Dáil Éireann , having spent nine months in politics . His reasoning was that he had " virtually no influence or input " . He returned to RTÉ in May 2010 , and presented Mind Your Business , followed by The Business on RTÉ Radio 1 from 2010 .

= = Early and personal life = =

Lee 's father was a motor mechanic and his mother was a hairdresser . Lee was the seventh in a family of eight children and grew up in Templeogue , Dublin . He attended Coláiste Éanna , a Christian Brothers ' School in the Dublin suburb of Ballyroan . Lee is a graduate of University College Dublin and holds an MSc in Economics from the London School of Economics where his specialist area was labour economics and unemployment .

He is married to Mary Lee (née Kitson) , they have two children , Alison and Harry , and lives in Cabinteely . Lee famously travelled to work in RTÉ using a Segway , once giving it a test ride live on Tubridy Tonight .

= = Career = =

Lee joined the civil service as an executive officer in the Central Statistics Office . Two years later he started at University College Dublin where he studied economics under academics such as Brendan Walsh and Peter Neary .

Prior to his move into broadcasting , he lectured in NUI , Galway and then worked as a journalist with The Sunday Business Post . Lee was also a Senior Economist at Riada Stockbrokers . He also worked as Treasury Economist with FTI and as a research economist with the Central Bank of Ireland .

From 1992 to 2009 he worked in RTÉ , the public broadcasting service of Ireland . He was appointed Economics Editor with RTÉ in 1996 . Lee was named Irish Journalist of the Year , along with Charlie Bird , in 1998 after they uncovered a major tax evasion and overcharging scandal at National Irish Bank . He has devised , researched and presented several television series , including Moneybox , More To Do , Winds of Change , and Beyond the Berlin Wall . He is thought of as an " economics guru " . He left RTÉ " in the late 1990s " to work for BCP Stockbrokers . He left the job and returned to his RTÉ post the next day .

Before embarking on his political career , he filmed a four @-@ part series based on the fall of the Berlin Wall in 2008 . It was aired on RTÉ One in November 2009 .

George Lee was parodied in the 1990s comedy Bull Island , where he was seen " menacingly staring down the lens of a camera " , and has also been featured on RTÉ 2fm 's Nob Nation .

= = = Political career = = =

On 5 May 2009 on the News at One on RTÉ Radio 1 , Lee announced that he was resigning as Economic Editor with RTÉ and announced his intention to seek the Fine Gael nomination for the Dublin South by @-@ election in 2009 . Lee took a year 's unpaid leave from RTÉ in May 2009 . On 6 May 2009 Lee was chosen as the Fine Gael candidate for the by @-@ election . He was the only candidate for the nomination .

He was elected on the first count to represent Dublin South on 6 June 2009 . He received over 53 % of the 1st preference vote . In total he received 27 @, @ 768 1st preference votes . His RTÉ position was filled by Europe editor Sean Whelan , but only as correspondent . Instead , David Murphy was promoted to Business Editor . When elected , Lee was referred to as a " Celebrity TD "

In an opinion poll concerning support for possible candidates in the 2011 presidential election conducted by the Sunday Independent in October 2009 , Lee came third , receiving 12 % support , in front of former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern among other high @-@ profile politicians .

Lee highlighted the failure of EMPG , the holding company for US publisher Houghton Mifflin Harcourt , and the potential impact on the Irish taxpayers of the loans given by Anglo Irish Bank to the investors in EMPG on 13 January 2010 . Lee saw this as another example for the urgent need of an investigation into the Irish banking crisis .

= = = Resignation from politics = = =

On 8 February 2010 he announced his resignation from Fine Gael and from Dáil Éireann , due to having " virtually no influence or input " into shaping Fine Gael 's economic policies at a time of economic upheaval . It emerged that on 2 February , Lee met with the Fine Gael leader Enda Kenny and told him of his intention to resign . Kenny then offered Lee the frontbench position as spokesman on economic planning . Speaking to reporters outside Leinster House soon after his announcement , Lee said it would have been dishonest of him to accept the position : " I had absolutely no input for nine months . I think I had to be honest with myself and honest with the electorate about that and not pretend . " Asked if his resignation was a vote of no confidence in Kenny , Lee said there were " certainly lots of large mutterings at the moment in relation to the leader 's position " . He said he had " minimal involvement " with Fine Gael finance spokesman Richard Bruton . " I had a maximum of two or three conversations with Richard Bruton in a total nine months period . I don ? t know how my relationship is with [him] " Lee said .

Kenny noted Lee had been appointed chair of the party 's committee on economic policy and also its forum . " I had anticipated a very important role for [George Lee] in the coming period with Fine Gael . " Kenny 's spokesman later dismissed the proposition that the resignation had implications for his leadership . He cited the public endorsement of Kenny by 20 Dáil deputies over the course of the weekend . Former Fine Gael leader Michael Noonan said he was surprised at the decision : " I thought that George Lee was fitting in well " , adding that he believed he would have been a cabinet member in a Fine Gael @-@ led government .

George Lee was criticised after his resignation by Senator Eoghan Harris , who was speaking on the Lunchtime programme of Newstalk Radio . Harris suggested financial considerations and long working hours of politicians were the reasons why Lee resigned . Fine Gael TD Brian Hayes , who was Lee 's campaign manager in the Dublin South by @-@ election , said that in discussions with Lee , the latter had complained about " a major reduction in his income " since leaving RTÉ to become a Dáil backbencher . Lee denied that financial considerations had anything to do with his decision to quit politics .

= = = Return to RTÉ = = =

RTÉ received a letter from Lee confirming his intentions to return after his leave of absence . The Sunday Tribune said on 14 February 2010 that he would have to wait for three months before returning to RTÉ . Exactly a year after leaving RTÉ , he returned to the broadcaster on 5 May 2010 . He worked as an advisor on the RTÉ business desk . He presented Mind Your Business on RTÉ Radio 1 on Saturday Mornings as a summer replacement for The Business .

When John Murray moved to present his own programme , Lee took over The Business slot on 4 September 2010 on Saturday mornings on RTÉ Radio 1 . In addition to the radio edition , Lee has presented a televised version on RTÉ One , also titled The Business .