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28 April 2023

The Statler, 107 Delaware Ave, Buffalo, NY

5:30-9pm

#IrishArtsBuffalo

The Irish of America are renowned for their artistic genius. Indeed, in many fields of endeavour it's the artists of Irish America who are leading the way. And it's not just that Irish America has nurtured some of our greatest talents – from John Gregory Dunne and Alice McDermott in letters to Anjelica Huston and John Cusack in film and from the late, great duo Dennis Cahill and Mick Moloney in music to Michael Flatley and Darrah Carr in dance - but that the cream of the Emerald Isle's artists dream to perform in the US.

The Irish Echo Arts Awards are a unique ceremony born from a desire to salute Irish America's cultural champions.

During Covid, our awards moved online and raised a glass to the actors and writers, poets and playwrights who kept our spirits high in the hardest of times.

But now we are stepping out lightly with an in-person event in the city which is bold enough to declare itself the Capital of Irish America: Buffalo, New York.

Join us for this exciting and unique celebration of Irish America's artists in Buffalo on Friday 28 April 2023.

Our accommodation partner is the Five-Star Curtiss Hotel in Buffalo. To avail of our special discounted rate of \$220 (plus taxes) for overnight stay on 28 April, please call the hotel on 716.954.4900 and ask for the Irish Arts Awards Room Block.

<https://curtisshotel.com/>



Honorary Chairs 2023

Tim Bohen

Tim Bohen works as an oncology representative for Genentech. He has spent the last fifteen years promoting Western New York's rich Irish heritage and culture. In 2012, he published *Against the Grain: The History of Buffalo's First Ward*, a history of Buffalo's oldest Irish community. Three years after his book's publication, Buffalo's local PBS station, WNED, produced a popular documentary called *Buffalo's First Ward*. Tim was consulted on the content of the program and was a key participant in the film. He was also interviewed and appeared in WCNY's documentary *Erie: The Canal That Made America*, where he discussed the role of Irish laborers in building the Erie Canal. This documentary was broadcast nationally. In 2015, C-SPAN came to Buffalo as part of their Cities Tour series and interviewed Tim about the First Ward and the Irish beginnings in Buffalo.



Tim currently serves on the board of trustees for the Irish Classical Theatre Company, one of Buffalo's premier theater companies. Tim has also published articles in *Western New York Heritage* magazine on the Buffalo Irish singer and songwriter Chauncey Olcott and pioneering Buffalo Irish businesswoman Emily McDonnell. Tim regularly writes articles on interesting Buffalo Irish citizens and historical topics for the Buffalo Irish Times newspaper. In 2023, Tim's history of the Irish in Western New York will be published.

Jack O'Donnell Managing Partner O'Donnell & Associates Buffalo, NY.



Jack offers clients a unique understanding of the intersection of politics and policy. That knowledge—together with years of experience—form the basis of intelligent, strategic plans and their dynamic execution, delivering results for New York's most successful leaders, entrepreneurs, advocates, and activists. Jack is focused on problem solving. He founded O'Donnell & Associates to offer clients a solutions-focused approach to government

relations and public affairs. He helps clients pass—and stop—legislation, solve complex regulatory matters, craft multi-million dollar economic development packages, and win state awards and grants including multi-billion dollar procurements.

Over a decade as a partner in one of New York's largest public affairs firm helped Jack learn the ropes of lobbying and government affairs. He represents a diverse clientele including Fortune 200 companies, non-profits, biotech start-ups, and labor unions.

O'Donnell's experience in government includes serving in senior positions for United States Senator Chuck Schumer and as a Senior Policy Advisor to the State Comptroller. Politically, Jack has provided strategic advice and field and communications counsel to campaigns for President, United State Senate, and Governor as well as numerous statewide and congressional campaigns.

O'Donnell has served as an adjunct faculty member at Canisius College and has been honored as a rising leader by both Buffalo's Business First and City & State. He is the author of *Bitten By The Tiger*, the true story of William Sulzer, the only governor to be impeached in New York State history and a contributing author of *Impeachment*. Jack was recently named one of the top 50 political strategists in New York State and as a Western New York Power 100.

Jack is a graduate of Canisius College and the State University of New York at Buffalo Law School. He is the founder of Transplant Miracles Foundation, a non-profit organization that provides support to transplant recipients; a board member of Buffalo Niagara Waterkeepers; a trustee of the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy; and President of the Buffalo Police Foundation.

Mr. O'Donnell, his wife Marina, and their children, Thomas and Elsie, divide their time between Buffalo, Albany, and New York City.



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Gerry Dixon

Gerry grew up in West Clare (Kilrush) where he was influenced greatly by his mother Christina to pursue a career in Irish music which he now does on a part time basis. He is currently the Director of Fleet Operations for Modern Disposal in Lewiston, NY and lives with his wife Carleen in Hamburg NY. The couple have two sons James and Gerard and a daughter Christina.



Michael Meade

Group CEO Sullivan's Brewing Company New York

Michael Meade is the Group CEO of Sullivan's Brewing Company. Michael is also the Founder and Co- Managing Partner of 1702 Irish Ales Group LLC, a vehicle which was formed to provide Sullivan's Brewing Company with its initial seed capital as well as additional ongoing investment. Recently Michael co-founded and is Co-Managing Partner of Foraging Partners LLC, an entity for investing in start-up and early-stage companies. Michael spent twenty-five years on Wall Street, the first half of which was in Institutional Fixed Income roles across the spectrum of credit products at Deutsche Bank and Morgan Stanley, primarily covering central banks, asset managers, public pensions, and state treasury clients.



Ultimately, Michael held Managing Director positions in Equity Finance at both Morgan Stanley and Citi, with his primary focus being on the hedge fund client base. Michael earned his double major in Political Science (elected to Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honour Society) and Spanish Studies at Fordham University in the Bronx.

Maria Deasy

President of Irish American Writers & Artists

She is a New York-based actress, singer, writer, and producer, who won the Bairbre Dowling Spirit of the Festival Award at Origin Theatre's 2019 1st Irish Festival, where she also received Best Actress nominations that year and in 2018. In New York, she has performed at The Roundabout, the Lucille Lortel, and Theatre For The New City, among many others. Her film appearances include Aimy In A Cage starring Crispin Glover, Barry Levinson's Sleepers, the award-winning films Contact Zone and The Anniversary, and several television shows.



Currently, she is producing and starring in "Peace And Love In Brooklyn – In Concert," a new Irish musical by Cork-born singer songwriter Eamon O'Tuama, to be performed at the Irish Arts Center as part of Origin's 1st Irish Festival in January.

A graduate of Brown University, she also attended the Midsummer in Oxford program through Yale Drama School, and has completed the Commercial Theatre Institute's 14-week program, "Advanced Topics in Producing For The Theatre." In 2021, she was honored with the Irish Echo's Arts & Culture Award for her effort and spirit in arts-led recovery during the Covid-19 pandemic. www.mariadeasy.com



Honorary Chairs 2023

James Maynard

Curator, The Poetry Collection

James Maynard, PhD is Curator of the Poetry Collection, the library of record for 20th- and 21st-century poetry in English, and Coordinator of the Rare & Special Books Collection at the University at Buffalo (UB) Libraries.



James has written, edited, or contributed to more than 20 books, is the author or editor of numerous other publications, and has presented his works nationally and internationally. He has published widely on and edited a number of collections relating to the poet Robert Duncan, including *Ground Work: Before the War/In the Dark* (2006), *(Re:) Working the Ground: Essays on the Late Writings of Robert Duncan* (2011), *Robert Duncan and the Pragmatist Sublime* (2018), and *No Hierarchy of the Lovely: Ten Uncollected Essays and Other Prose 1939–1981* (2020). His edition of *Robert Duncan: Collected Essays and Other Prose* (2014) received the Poetry Foundation's Pegasus Award for Poetry Criticism.

As Curator of the Poetry Collection, James directs the UB James Joyce Collection, the world's largest collection of manuscripts and other materials by and about the renowned Irish writer. In 2009 he helped organize the exhibition *Discovering James Joyce: The University at Buffalo Collection* and edited the exhibition catalogue of the same title. For the 100th anniversary of *Ulysses* in 2022, the Poetry Collection organized a number of centennial events and programs and collaborated with other celebrations around the world.

For Bloomsday 2021 the collection launched a 36-foot mural of Joyce in downtown Buffalo and announced its current campaign to increase the visibility of and expand public access to the James Joyce Collection through a proposed UB James Joyce Museum. This initiative also aims to guarantee the collection's future success by securing endowment funding for a James Joyce curator position, acquisitions and preservation, and programming and exhibitions.

A graduate of Ursinus College, Temple University, and the University at Buffalo, James was a 2020-2021 Mid-American Conference Academic Leadership Development Program Fellow and a recipient of the 2021

SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Professional Service. In 2018 he received an Irish Echo Community Champion Award for his work with the UB James Joyce collection.

Maura Mulligan

Author, Múinteoir

A Mayo native, Maura Mulligan is author of the memoir, *"Call of the Lark"* published in 2012 by Greenpoint Press, New York. A retired New York City Public School teacher, Maura earned a Master's Degree from Hunter College of the City University of New York. Currently she teaches Irish language and Céilí dance in NYC.



Member of Irish American Writers & Artists and Board Member of The American Irish Teachers Association, she is founder of Nollaig Na mBan NY.

Maura Mulligan was honored as "Irish Woman of the Year" by The Irish American Heritage & Culture Committee, Inc. Department of Education, City of New York in 2018 and was a recipient of The Irish Echo's "Arts & Culture Awards 2021." A staged reading of her new play *BRIGID* will be featured on Origin Theater's 1st Irish Festival on January 31, 2023

Darrah Carr

Founder Darrah Carr Dance

Darrah Carr has been active for over twenty-five years in both the Irish and modern dance communities as a choreographer, dancer, educator, and writer. She is the Founder and Artistic Director of Darrah Carr Dance – a Bessie award nominated Irish step dance company based in New York City. Carr describes her choreographic style as *ModERIN*: a unique blend of traditional Irish step and contemporary modern dance. Recent performance highlights include: "Good Morning America," "The Today Show," the New York Pops at Carnegie Hall, The Duke Theater on 42nd Street, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Celebrate Brooklyn, The Irish Repertory Theater, and a collaboration with Seán Curran Company for the Opening





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Season of the new Irish Arts Center in midtown Manhattan. Darrah Carr Dance is on the roster of Siegel Artist Management and has performed at venues throughout the United States including Jacob's Pillow, MASS MoCA, and The Yard. The company has toured internationally throughout Ireland and Canada. Carr holds a PhD in Dance from Texas Woman's University. She received her MFA in Choreography & Performance from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Wesleyan University. Carr is an Assistant Professor and Chair of the Conservatory of Dance at Purchase College. A respected scholar, Carr has presented her research at the Dance Studies Association, the National Dance Education Organization, the World Dance Alliance, and Dance Research Forum Ireland and she has contributed numerous articles to Dance Magazine, Dance Teacher, Dance Spirit, Dance Studio Life, Dancer and The Dance Insider. Carr has authored chapters for "Close to the Floor: Irish Dance from the Boreen to Broadway," and "A Life in Dance: A Practical Guide." She was named one of the "Top 40 Under 40" by The Irish Echo and was awarded the Irish Heritage Award from the New York City Comptroller Office in recognition of her contribution to the cultural life of New York City. www.darrahcarrdance.com

Emily Reid

Emily Reid is Director of Operations for New York State Senator Timothy M. Kennedy, who represents the 63rd Senate District in New York State, which includes the City of Buffalo, Town of Cheektowaga, and City of Lackawanna.



Emily coordinates the Senator's schedule both in the district and in Albany. Additionally, she clerks the Senate's Subcommittee on State-Native American Relations, which Senator Kennedy chairs. A native of South Buffalo, a neighborhood with deep ties to Ireland, Emily also serves as the South Buffalo Community Liaison for the Senator's office.

Through her work as South Buffalo Community Liaison, Emily has taken on various Irish relations initiatives alongside Senator Kennedy. She has coordinated various dignitaries' visits to Buffalo, including former Lord Mayor of Belfast Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, Senator Billy Lawless, and Ambassador Daniel Mulhall. Alongside Senator Mark Daly, Cathaoirleach

of the Irish Senate, Emily has worked on various initiatives to promote the American Irish Legislators Caucus.

In partnership with various Irish organizations and leaders, Emily produced an informational video showcasing the treasures of Irish Buffalo which premiered at the New York-New Belfast Conference in 2020.

Emily serves on the event planning committee for the Buffalo Irish Center's Annual St. Patrick's Day Civic Luncheon, as well as the South Buffalo Community Table's Annual Get Together.

Emily holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies and a Master of Arts in American Studies, both from the University at Buffalo. She previously worked in international visitor programming at the International Institute of Buffalo, where she hosted international delegations from 87 different countries.

Senator Tim Kennedy

Since being sworn into office in January 2011, Senator Tim Kennedy has fought to ensure Western New York sees its fair share of funding and state resources. In March 2019, three months after being named Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, Tim delivered an unprecedented \$100 million for the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) to fund a five year capital plan for maintenance and improvements of the Metro Rail.



In his role as Chair, Tim has set an aggressive agenda. He sponsored legislation to allow municipalities to install cameras on school buses, in order to more effectively catch drivers who break the law and jeopardize student safety by passing stopped buses. He also spearheaded a package comprehensive limo safety reforms, in order to strengthen the industry standards and better protect New Yorkers who use alternative transportation. Tim drafted these reforms alongside the families of victims involved in limo crashes in Schoharie and Cutchogue. Both houses have passed these transportation priorities, and the Governor quickly signed them into law.



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Throughout his time in office, Tim has kept a strong focus on protecting the most vulnerable in our community. He spearheaded the passage of Jay-J's law, legislation that stiffens penalties for repeat child abusers. The legislation was inspired by Jay-J Bolvin, a young boy who was brutally abused by his father. Sadly, Jay-J's father received a light sentence due to antiquated sentencing laws, but through Tim's advocacy, these penalties were strengthened. Tim also penned Jackie's Law, which protects victims of domestic violence from GPS stalking, and was signed into law in 2014.

Tim knows the importance of growing and protecting Western New York's workforce, which is why he was a supporter of the creation of the Northland Workforce Center on Buffalo's East Side. He actively works to connect Western New Yorkers with job opportunities, whether through his jobs website, Kennedy Jobs File, or through his annual Queen City Job Fair, which draws hundreds of employers and job seekers every year. While he regularly works one-on-one with companies to establish roots in Buffalo, he strongly believes in preserving the city's past. He led the call for \$5 million of the Buffalo Billion funding to be dedicated towards the reuse and restructuring of Buffalo's iconic Central Terminal, and helped to bring the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra to the Terminal for a full day East Side Festival, offering a free concert to thousands of Western New Yorkers.

Tim is a lifelong Western New York resident. He grew up in a blue-collar family in Buffalo, where his parents, Marty and Mary Kennedy, raised Tim and his four siblings to work hard, focus on their education, help their neighbors, and get involved in their community. Tim attended St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute before going on to earn his bachelor's and master's degrees in occupational therapy at D'Youville College. For 11 years, Tim worked with geriatric and pediatric populations to help them recover from injuries and fully participate in all life situations. As a licensed occupational therapist, Tim has spent his entire career working to help people.

Tim and his wife, Katie, live in the City of Buffalo where they are raising their three children, Connor, Eireann, and Padraic.

Matthew Sperber

Matthew Sperber is a songwriter, guitarist, and banjo player born and raised in the heart of New York State's Finger Lakes region. He has called Buffalo, NY his home since 2004 and lives today in the Irish-heritage neighborhood of South Buffalo. Matthew performs in acclaimed string band, The Brothers Blue and Western New York's premier Irish-traditional folk group, Crikwater. In addition he is a part of the musical group, Normal St. Entrance with members of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Amy Licata and Brett Shurtliffe. They have performed on multiple occasions with the BPO and were featured on the PBS special, Live at the Kate with Owen and Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin. Matthew is also a founding member of community organization, South Buffalo Roots and has helped to organize the South Buffalo Irish Festival since 2018.





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Sean Heidinger

Sean joined Douglas Development Corporation in April of 2020 as the Director of Business Development. In this role, Sean oversees all business development activities, including communications, public relations, marketing, and community management for Seneca One in Buffalo, NY, and for the company's growing portfolio of properties in WNY.



Prior to joining Douglas Development, Sean was formerly the Business Development Manager for the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, Inc. (BNMC) where he managed the BNMC's incubation pipeline, educational programming, and events at the BNMC's Innovation Center and its other properties on the Medical Campus. In addition, Sean oversaw the Innovation Center's dig co-working space, providing unparalleled customer service, and a variety of unique programming offerings, most notably coordinating the global coding competition, the 2017 Topcoder Open. In 2018, Sean received a certification in Incubation Management from INBIA and has been passionate about the startup ecosystem for nearly a decade.

Sean is a connector, community builder, and creative with an entrepreneurial spirit, and has been at the center of driving Buffalo's amazing rebirth. He is the Chapter Director for Startup Grind Buffalo, and is also involved in many local organizations, including the Power Players at Explore & More Children's Museum as well as Young Professionals for the Olmsted Parks.

In his free time, he enjoys , playing with his dog, Bacchus, and occasionally hitting the links. On St. Paddy's Day Weekend, expect to see Sean leading the march at the Old Ward Parade.

Michael O'Keefe Actor

As an actor, Michael O'Keefe has garnered both Golden Globe and Academy Award nominations. He's appeared in the films, Michael Clayton, Frozen River, The Pledge, Ironweed, The Great Santini and Caddyshack. Television audiences will remember him as "Fred" on Roseanne. Other TV appearances also include Sneaky Pete, City On A Hill, Masters Of Sex, The West Wing, Law and Order, House M.D., The Closer and Brothers and Sisters. He's appeared on Broadway in Reckless, Side Man, Fifth of July and Mass Appeal, for which he received a Theater World Award.



As a writer he was the lyricist for the Grammy winning song, Longing in Their Hearts, which was composed and sung by Bonnie Raitt. He's also written with Irish singer/songwriter Paul Brady, Suzzu Roche, and numerous other composers. His collaboration with Suzzu Roche, Used To Be, is featured in the film One True Loves. His poetry and short stories have appeared in BOMB, Lake Affect and Chaparral. He holds an MFA from the Creative Writing Seminars at Bennington College.

Dawn Doherty Music Director Aisling Irish Center Céili Band & Ballad Group

Dawn is an All-Ireland champion & the winner of Irish Echo's People's choice award 40 under 40 in 2020. During the pandemic, she excelled, with colleague Frankie McCormick, in keeping Irish music and dance alive through virtual and outdoors events. The Aisling Band and Ballad Group made a string of notable videos during the Covid crisis including for the Late Late Christmas Toy Show.





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Geraldine Hughes

Actor/Director

Geraldine Hughes received the Los Angeles Ovation, Garland and Drama Critics Circle Awards and a Drama League Award Nomination for Outstanding Performance for her solo play Belfast Blues, which she also wrote and performed. Other theatre credits include: Harry Potter And The Cursed Child, as Professor McGonagall, Jerusalem, (Broadway and West End), Particle Of Dread (opposite Stephen Rea), Cyrano De Bergerac (Broadway), Translations (Broadway), Molly Sweeney (Irish Repertory Theatre), Pumpgirl (MTC), Orson's Shadow, The Cripple of Inishmaan, The Weir, and The Architect. Television: Your Honor (recurring) Kevin Can Wait, Law and Order OC and SVU, The Blacklist (recurring), Blue Bloods, Nurse Jackie, Mercy, The Good Wife, Law and Order CI, Law & Order, Murder, She Wrote: The Celtic Riddle, ER. Film includes: The Book Of Henry, Time Out Of Mind, Gran Torino, Rocky Balboa and Killing Lincoln, and Nine Days. Geraldine received an honorary doctorate from Queens University, Belfast for her contribution to the arts. She is an Executive Producer on the film The Last Rifleman, starring Pierce Brosnan and a Producer on the film In The Land Of Saints And Sinners, starring Liam Neeson and Ciarán Hinds. She will be traveling to Japan in 2023 to film multiple episodes of Tokyo Vice Season 2 for HBO and has a number of film projects in development with her two companies Slieve, and Prodigal Films. Geraldine is a 2023 recipient of the Irish American Partnership's Nollaig na mBan women's leadership award. Geraldine is a patron of Integrated Education in the North of Ireland and is also a supporter of the MAC (Metropolitan Arts Centre) in Belfast.



Conor Hawkins

Conor is co-owner of The Banshee Irish Pub one of Buffalo's most authentic experiences of Irish food, culture, and sports which open in November of 2021 bringing in some huge names in Irish music to perform such as Derek Warfield and the Young Wolfe Tones, The Druids and The Friel Sisters to name but a few. He is also the General Manager of Buffalo's only 5-star hotel, the Curtiss Hotel and Sky Bar which is at the fore front of downtown's nightlife for the past 25 years. Belfast born he travels back home up to three times a year in search for the perfect pint of Guinness and the perfect round of golf which is yet to be achieved.



Tom Heneghan Buffalo, NY

Thomas Heneghan is the caretaker of the Tara Gift Shoppe, one of America's longest running Irish Import Shops. He has also been involved in the reincarnation of the Emerald Ball in the past and is a member of the North American Celtic Trade Association. In local Irish circles he's more known as Mary Kay Heneghan's twin and Mary Heneghan's son, which suits him just fine.





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DJ Granville Buffalo, NY

D.J. Granville of Buffalo, NY, is a 20 plus law enforcement veteran and currently serves as Chief of Narcotics and Intelligence with the Erie County Sheriff's Office under the leadership of Sheriff John Garcia and Undersheriff William Cooley. D.J. grew up in the Old First Ward and currently lives with his wife, Maria, and their children, in Buffalo, NY



Larry Kirwan

Larry Kirwan was born in Wexford and lives in New York City. He is a columnist with the Irish Echo and in 2022 received the Irish American Writers and Artists Eugene O'Neill Lifetime Achievement Award. Larry was leader of Black 47 for 25 years during which the political rock band played 2,500 gigs, released 16 albums and appeared on Leno, Letterman, O'Brien, Fallon and every major US TV show. He has written three novels including Liverpool Fantasy and Rockin' The Bronx, a memoir, Green Suede Shoes, and A History of Irish Music. His latest novel Rockaway Blue was recently published by Cornell U. Press. He has written or collaborated on 19 plays and musicals including Paradise Square which began at the cell in Manhattan as Hard Times (produced by Nancy Manocherian, directed by Kira Simring). He collaborated with Thomas Keneally (Schindler's List) on the musical Transport for which he wrote music and lyrics. It was produced at The Irish Repertory Theatre (directed by Tony Walton). His political thriller Rebel in the Soul was also produced at "The Rep." He is currently adapting The Informer for stage. A political activist, he is an Irish Echo columnist and celebrity host of Celtic Crush on SiriusXM Satellite Radio. He was president of Irish American Writers & Artists for five years. In 2022 he received a Tony nomination for co-writing the book for Broadway musical Paradise Square. The play follows the frequenters of a Five Points neighborhood saloon in Manhattan during the American Civil War, including the Black woman who owns it, a conflicted newly arrived Irish immigrant, a freedom seeker, and a once-great songwriter. Larry has written and collaborated on 19 plays and musicals.



Michael Anderson Senior VP Bank on Buffalo Buffalo, NY

Mike Anderson serves as the Regional Retail Administrator for up and coming Bank on Buffalo, a division of CNB Bank. Mike has held several retail leadership positions in his 20 year banking career. Mike most recently served as a Retail Area Leader for Key Bank. Prior to the Key Bank/ First Niagara merger, Mike served as an Area Retail leader for 4 years at First Niagara Bank and 3 years at HSBC Bank USA, N.A. Mike began his career at Fleet Bank in 2001. Mike was born and raised in South Buffalo. He has lived in Hamburg for the last 16 years with his wife Kelly and daughter Mia. Mike serves on several community boards including his role on the University at Buffalo Alumni Association (Past President), Treasurer for the WNY Perinatal Bereavement Network, and on the Board of Directors for the Amherst Chamber of Commerce. Mike received his Master's Degree in Business Administration from the UB School of Management EMBA program in 2017. Mike also received his undergraduate degree in Political Science from the UB College of Arts and Sciences in 1997. In 2014, Mike was honored as one of Business First's 40 under 40 for rising leaders in the local business community.



Bridget Ryan

Bridget is the Director of Sales at Fat Bob's Smokehouse; a local BBQ company with locations in Buffalo and East Aurora, NY along with catering and food trucks serving the WNY area. She is also an Irish Dance teacher with Rince Na Tiarna for the past 18 years receiving her TCRG accreditation from An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha in 2005. Between business and dancing, Bridget is actively involved in the WNY Irish community as a business sponsor of the Buffalo Fenians GAA club, Food & Beverage chairperson for the Buffalo Irish Festival and coaching students to compete at local, national and international events. Recently, Bridget was named as one of Business First 40 Under 40 winners, a recognition of her successes in both business and the community. Bridget resides in Buffalo with her husband, Patrick and three children.





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Meghan Quinn

Meghan Quinn's pride and involvement in her Irish heritage started at a young age, with her parents Anita and Patrick Crotty enrolling her in the Rince Na Tiarna School of Irish Dance at age 6. Meghan continued Irish dance through her life winning multiple regional and national team titles, learning the value of hard work and determination while making lifelong friendships. In 1994, Meghan's family took part in the Belfast Summer Relief program. The Belfast Summer Relief Program began in 1975 to provide children of Northern Ireland a carefree summer away from the political tension. Through this program Meghan met Pauline (Hutton) Daniels who traveled from Derry, to stay with Meghan and her parents for the summer. Pauline quickly became part of the family. Through the years both families have stayed in touch with Meghan and Pauline visiting most recently with their families in Buffalo in 2014 and Derry in 2016. Meghan is a graduate of Mount Mercy Academy (2002) and John Carroll University (2007) in Cleveland, OH. During her time at John Carroll, Meghan participated in the inaugural 'Ireland Peacebuilding Program' where she spent six weeks living at Queen's University in Belfast, Northern Ireland. As part of the program students met with members of government and political leaders, former paramilitaries, victims, police and peacemakers to learn first-hand the history of Northern Ireland. Meghan graduated John Carroll with a B.S.B.A. in Accountancy and a minor in Human Resources. After graduation, Meghan began working in public accounting and obtained her CPA license in 2009. Meghan moved to the banking industry in 2010 and currently works for HSBC as a Senior Vice President in the Commercial Bank. Meghan is a Senior Credit Manager Team Lead supporting international clients headquartered in the Great Lakes Region of the United States. Meghan is the Treasurer of South Buffalo Roots, a community organization responsible for the South Buffalo Irish Festival, South Buffalo Porchfest and Music in the Park series. In addition to these free events, the organization supports several South Buffalo community organizations and initiatives including the South Buffalo Community Table, Buffalo Irish Center, Buffalo Refuse, South Buffalo Sports organizations, local school fundraisers, 11 Day Power Play, Kids Escaping Drugs, Feed the Front Line and many others.



Meghan volunteers at her children's school, Notre Dame Academy. Meghan is one of the varsity cross country coaches and was previously the JV girls' basketball coach. Meghan was the recipient of Irish Echo's 40 under 40 Award in 2021 and received the Business Ambassador Award in addition to the 40 under 40 recognition. Meghan makes her home in South Buffalo with her famous accordion player husband Kevin, daughters Keira and Colleen, son Rory and dog Archie.

Lauren Caulfield

Lauren Caulfield's parents enrolled her at O'Sullivan Irish Dance Academy at age five sparking her passion for her Irish heritage at a young age. Lauren continued to Irish dance through her life evolving into a teaching assistant in her final years. During her Irish dance career, she won multiple regional and national team titles, coached award-winning soloists and teams, and successfully passed up to Grade 6 of the Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha (The Irish Dancing Commission) Grade Exams.



Lauren is a graduate of Mt. Mercy Academy (2008) where she volunteers her time as the Alumni Board President and St. Bonaventure University (2012, 2015) earning a B.A. in Psychology and MS.Ed. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling. While at Bonaventure, Lauren was chosen to participate in the Fr. Mychal Judge (FDNY chaplain and 9/11 victim) Center for Irish Exchange and Understanding Program where she spent a semester learning about the history of Northern Ireland's political, educational, economic, and reconciliation issues. The class concluded in an extensive thesis project and 10-day trip to Ireland to learn directly from political leaders, community members, artists, and higher education professors that have been involved in the Irish peace process.

Lauren began her post-college career in Higher Education and took a career detour to work in social media marketing at a local marketing agency, where she managed accounts for mainly small businesses in Buffalo – including navigating the ever-changing COVID-19 pandemic. She currently works for the Buffalo Board of Education. Lauren is the Marketing, PR, and Volunteer Coordinator of South Buffalo Roots, a



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community organization responsible for the South Buffalo Irish Festival, South Buffalo Porchfest, and Music In The Park Series. Alongside these events, their mission is to give back to organizations, initiatives, and beautification in our community with the funds raised at these free events.

You can find Lauren residing in South Buffalo, traveling with friends, color-coding her chaotic Google calendar, or spending any free time continuing to grow her small business founded in 2012, Picture This Creates.

Megan Hayes

Megan Hayes was born and raised in South Buffalo and has had a passion for her Irish heritage for as long as she can remember. She is one of the founding board members of South Buffalo Roots, a local nonprofit organization, where she plays an integral role in the planning and execution of the South Buffalo Irish Festival and Music In The Park Series. Megan is quick to find many community initiatives throughout our city to give back to with the funds raised at South Buffalo Roots' free events – some of these initiatives include Feed The Front Line workers campaign during the COVID-19 pandemic, Resource Council of WNY in response to the Buffalo Tops shooting, South Buffalo Community Table, 11 Day Power Play, Kids Escaping Drugs, and many others.



Megan is currently a Registered Nurse at Roswell Park Cancer Institute where she has worked for 16 years and counting. Megan volunteers her time as a Military Key Spouse working with military spouses and family members. Key Spouses are appointed by the unit Commander and serve as a trusted connection between the leadership and families providing resources, support, and information to military families.

Megan resides in South Buffalo with her husband Matt, daughter Bridgit, and dog Diggs. In her free time you can find Meg traveling, working the Holimont bike safety patrol, being a proud ordained minister through the Universal Life Church, and cheering on the Buffalo Bills!

Paul Blake

Paul Blake is currently the Secretary of South Buffalo Roots, a local community organization. As a parent, homeowner, and business owner in South Buffalo, he cares deeply about the success and well-being of our community. When approached about joining the board, he saw it as an amazing opportunity to celebrate his Irish Heritage as well as give back to the community through one of his favorite annual events – the South Buffalo Irish Festival. Since joining South Buffalo Roots, Paul has also spearheaded South Buffalo Porchfest, an annual event that brings together people and music of all genres in our neighborhood. He is proud to be part of this great organization that gives back to the community in so many and of all the work that we have done so far!



Paul resides in South Buffalo with his wife Shari and daughters Meghan and Riley.

Dan Smith South Buffalo, NY

Dan is a proud 7th generation First Ward/ South Buffalo resident, he is a graduate of Bishop Timon High School '96, Buffalo State College '02, and earned a master's degree from D'Youville College in '07 in Adolescent Education. For the last 21 years Dan has worked with the youth of Western New York as a Teacher, Coach, and Youth Counselor. Since 2012 he has been employed at The New York State Office of Children & Family Services serving the youth of our state in a variety of roles. Since 2015 Dan has coached baseball for the South Buffalo Baseball Association and coached basketball at Notre Dame Academy. Dan is a husband and proud father of two. He is a Highland Game Athlete and currently competes in the over 40 men's master's division. Every year he volunteers for the South Buffalo Irish Festival and enjoys giving back to the community he loves.





Honorary Chairs 2023

Kathleen Sullivan

Growing up in an Irish family in South Buffalo, Kathleen was introduced to Irish heritage at a young age. Kathleen's parents enrolled her in Irish dancing when she was 4 – and her sisters followed. This experience not only left her with some of her fondest friendships and memories, but it started a life-long love and appreciation for the rich history, traditions, and music of Ireland. Her daughter, Grace, also carried on this tradition as an Irish Dancer with Rince Na Tiarna, and has now started performing both the American and Irish national anthems at local events – including at the upcoming 2023 Irish American Arts and Culture Awards event! In 2020, Kathleen was chosen as one of the Irish Echo 40 Under 40 Award recipients. She also volunteers her time as the President of South Buffalo Roots, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the promotion of Irish culture and heritage associated with South Buffalo and the promotion and maintenance of public spaces that help define that community. Kathleen and the other dedicated individuals on the committee organize and run the South Buffalo Irish Festival which has become one of the paramount local traditions along with South Buffalo Porchfest and the Music In The Park Summer Series. The South Buffalo Irish Festival has become one of the largest free music festivals in Western New York and focuses its attention on sharing Irish music and culture with thousands each year. South Buffalo Roots not only runs this festival but is involved throughout the year giving back to the community and its people, promoting continuous improvement and growth. In addition to South Buffalo Roots, you will often see Kathleen involved in her community and school community. As a former college runner, she enjoys coaching the 5-8th grade boys and girls cross country team at her children's school, Notre Dame Academy, and also co-organizes the league. Kathleen graduated from Ithaca College in 2002 with a BS in Television-Radio and minors in Sports Studies and Politics. Although she has had jobs in all three areas, she has been in pharmaceutical sales for 19 years. She is currently an Executive Sales Representative with Lilly USA in the Diabetes Business Unit and is the owner of Hometown Grace.



Headline Partner

- Awards rebranded as 'In Association with...' your company
- Address to Guests at Gala Dinner and presentation of key award
- A table for eight at the Irish Echo Irish American Arts and Culture Awards gala dinner
- Full-page advertisement in the Irish Echo Irish American Arts and Culture Awards supplement.
- Banner ad on irishecho.com website
- Branding on all publicity assets
- Short company video promoted via online platform and social media

\$10,000

Platinum Partner

- Full-page advertisement in the Irish Echo Irish American Arts and Culture Awards supplement
- Four tickets to the Irish Echo Irish American Arts and Culture Awards gala dinner
- Ad on irishecho.com website
- Your company logo on all marketing assets
- Short company video promoted via online platform and social media

\$5,000

Gold Partner

- Logo on all materials
- Half-page advertisement in the Irish Echo Irish American Arts and Culture Awards supplement
- Four tickets to the Irish Echo Irish American Arts and Culture Awards gala dinner
- Sponsorship of Gala dinner table menu/running order

\$3,000

Patron Partner

- Two tickets for the gala dinner
- Half-page advertisement in the Irish Echo Irish American Arts and Culture Awards supplement

\$1,500

Table of ten

\$2,300

Pair of tickets

\$460

Individual ticket

\$250

Our accommodation partner is the Five-Star Curtiss Hotel in Buffalo. To avail of our special discounted rate of \$220 (plus taxes) for overnight stay on 28 April, please call the hotel on 716.954.4900 and ask for the Irish Arts Awards Room Block.
<https://curtisshotel.com/>



28 April 2023
Buffalo, New York

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