



#IrishHeroes

IrishEcho HEROES OF IRISH AMERICA AWARDS 2025

LAOCHRA GHAEL-MHEIRICEÁ

Friday May 16, 2025 • Buffalo Convention Center, Buffalo, NY
6:00 - 10:00pm • After-Party: Banshee Bar with Crikwater



OUR 2025 HONOREES



O'DONNELL
& ASSOCIATES
Intelligence. Guided by Experience



HEROES OF IRISH AMERICA AWARDS



Heroes Abound With Dedication Unbounded

By Ray O'Hanlon

Having observed Irish America from a distance some days, and up close most days, I have long understood a central dynamic that fuels a part of America that makes America precisely what it is: a montage of peoples and traditions working together in one nation, under one flag, and by doing so forming a society that is unique in the grand story of earthly nations.

That's a long winded way of saying "what a country." And, yes, what a country. The United States is what it is because of the contributions of people from every corner of the world.

Ireland is a corner, albeit a small one. But Ireland's contribution to America, as we know, is anything but small. Take the Irish out of America and it would be unrecognizable, a place entirely different from what it is.

This is not entirely due to numbers. The estimate of the size of Irish America fluctuates depending on who's talking, and at what point in time. Over the years I have heard every number from 30 million to 44 million Americans who claim at least one familial line back to Ireland.

I tend to go with the highest estimate so, with a growing population, that number should be even higher than 44 million.

Irish Americans live in every state, but we all know the places where they have been especially concentrated in the almost 250 years of the Republic. There are those great cities where the Irish made new homes during the peak years of immigration.

Buffalo, New York State's second largest city, is one of those cities.

I found this online, a list of Irish standouts for Buffalo published in the Buffalo News back in 1980.

The list read in part: "The Irish were the first immigrants to join the Yankees in what is now Buffalo. In 1817 a small settlement south of Exchange Street, on 'the Flats,' included the O'Rourke's, the Bowens, the Daughtrys, the Mooneys. Most of them came by way of Philadelphia, Baltimore and New York. Many came through Canada. A few arrived with Joseph Ellicott to survey the land.

"Patrick O'Rourke's was the first Irish Catholic family, settling in about 1815.

"When the Erie Canal was under construction, many Irishmen were attracted to this area to work at \$1.87 a day. Irish immigrants played a key role in digging the canal, in scooping grain from ships using this system, and in building the railroads.

"By 1841, the Irish had elected their first mayor, Isaac Harrington, and had built their first church, St. Patrick's, at Ellicott and Broadway.

"Then came the great potato famine, which killed a million in Ireland and sent 1.5 million immigrants to America, between 1845 and 1855. When it was over, there were 10,000 Irishmen in Buffalo.

"John Timon became the first bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo in 1847, beginning a line of 10 bishops of Irish origin down to the present.

"As industry invaded the lake shore, the Irish in Buffalo moved from the Flats to the Old First Ward, where they would be concentrated until spreading into South Buffalo around 1900. They lived in the poorest shanties, and when cholera struck in 1849, some 90 percent of the 877 dead were foreign-born laborers, mostly Irish."

This is a familiar narrative. And a reminder that, in America, there are many such Irish narratives.

Irish America has its internal rivalries; friendly ones for the most part. Those who actively partici-

pate in Irish American life like to be noticed. This is especially true around Saint Patrick's Day when claims are made about which city is the beating heart of Irish America, its de facto capital.

In truth, there are many beating hearts. And size does not tell the entire story. Each outpost of Irish America is, to coin a phrase, sui generis, unique.

Buffalo is such an outpost. There are Irish stories in Buffalo. An abundance of them. That cornucopia will be added to this coming Friday when "The Heroes of Irish America Awards" gathering comes back to the city of its birth.

What will be the Second Annual Heroes of Irish America Awards will take place in the Buffalo Convention Center on Friday, May 16.

The event is a raising of the glass to the unsung heroes of Irish America - ordinary folks, doing extraordinary work to build stronger communities.

In April 2023, the Irish Echo brought its Irish Arts & Culture Awards to Buffalo and was given the green carpet treatment by its ebullient Irish American community.

Arts and Culture will be part of this year's Heroes Awards. But there will be much more besides.

The awards will also salute the countless Americans of Irish birth and extraction that have gone before the actual award winners.

Irish America is, at one level, an abstract concept. It is not a thing. You can't hold it in your hand.

But it's there. It is an enormous past, present and future collaboration of people combined with the individual strivings of many millions of people.

Some of them, a tiny but representative group, are about to be honored. We are immensely proud of them. They should be immensely proud of themselves. Irish America should be proud of them. America should be proud of them.

Treasure troves from Paris

By Peter McDermott
pmcdermott@irishecho.com

The right person, in the right place, at the right time. That in essence explains how the University at Buffalo came to have the largest James Joyce collection in the world.

The person was UB professor of English Dr. Oscar Silverman. He was on a 1949 sabbatical in Paris when Librairie La Hune, a bookstore and gallery on Boulevard Saint-Germain, featured "Exposition en homage à James Joyce" from Oct. 15 to Dec. 10.

"He saw it a number of times," said Dr. James Maynard, curator of the UB Poetry Collection, which includes the James Joyce Collection.

Silverman was accompanied on one visit by Lucie Léon, wife of Paul Léon, Joyce's late friend and secretary. Friends and supporters had put together the show based on family documents and artifacts with a view to supporting the writer's wife Nora who'd left wartime Paris with him 10 years earlier, before France fell to Nazi Germany. "The idea was at the end of the exhibition they would auction it off," Maynard said of the event titled, "James Joyce: Sa vie, son oeuvre, son rayonnement," which also had a stint in London.

Silverman saw the opportunity, and upon his return to the then privately-run University of Buffalo initiated the effort that led to the transfer of the exhibition's almost 600 items to a permanent American home in 1950. That was just the beginning of UB's remarkable collection of Joyceana - five more major installments from three sources would be added through the next 18 years, with the most notable being the 1959 acquisition from "Ulysses" publisher, and owner of the Paris bookstore Shakespeare and Company, Sylvia Beach.

"A tour of the Joyce collection is truly a transformative experience," Maynard said.

Right now, though, it's recommended that visits are

organized in advance of traveling to UB. "We've always been limited by our current facilities," the curator said. So, in recent times, the Poetry Collection set in motion a process that will see the creation of a UB James Joyce Museum.

"This collection belongs to the people," Maynard said. The plan has won public support in Buffalo, including in its sizable Irish-American community, and the backing of leaders such as Congressman Tim Kennedy. The State of New York has donated \$10 million to UB, which is part of the SUNY system, for the creation of the museum. Official Irish backing has been enthusiastic, with former Ambassador to the U.S. Daniel Mulhall and former Consul General to New York Ciarán Madden speaking on a promotional video for the museum, alongside writers like Colm Tóibín.

In the video, Kelly Hayes McAlonie, director of Campus Planning, said that the museum's proposed location on the South Campus at Abbott Hall is a "front door" for UB, and so putting it there "will only enhance the university and also the community at large."

What is now called the Poetry Collection was established in 1935, and thus UB had some practice in negotiation and acquisition. The promise to Nora Joyce that the family's papers, books, photographs, portraits and other personal effects would be kept safe and not dispersed led to a \$5,000 check being sent to Europe and a second for the same amount after their arrival in Buffalo.

The funding came in the form of a gift from Margaretta F. Wickser made in memory of her husband Philip J. Wickser, a Buffalo arts patron, book collector and lawyer who was president of the American Bar Association.

However, Buffalo's extraordinary collection would never have been possible without the earlier endeavors of another couple, Paul and Lucie Léon. Maynard has written that the novelist's secretary Paul "twice crossed



James Joyce at age 6 with his parents and maternal grandfather. THE POETRY COLLECTION OF THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES, UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

the streets of occupied Paris with a handyman and a pushcart to rescue materials from Joyce's apartment [at 34 rue des Vignes], having bribed the concierge, and [he] later bought back additional items when they were auctioned off by the owner of the apartment as reimbursement for unpaid rent."

On Aug. 21, 1941, Paul Léon was arrested by the Nazis (Joyce had died in Zurich on Jan. 13). He was transferred the following year to Auschwitz, where he was murdered. Lucie Léon, later the guide to UB's Dr. Silverman at the exhibition, ensured that Joyce's belongings were kept safe in Paris for the war's duration.

Continues on page 24



Jack O'Donnell
Managing Partner

**Congratulations to
The Irish Echo on
a successful 2025
Heroes of Irish
America Awards!**
O'Donnell &
Associates is
proud to support
Irish culture
throughout New
York State and
especially here in
Buffalo—the
capital of Irish
America!



**O'DONNELL
& ASSOCIATES**
Intelligence. Guided by Experience

O'Donnell & Associates

Government Relations & Public Affairs Consulting

Buffalo | Albany | NYC
Washington D.C.

For more information, visit us at
www.odonnellsolutions.com or
give us a call at **716.882.3100**



HEROES OF IRISH AMERICA AWARDS

Buffalo's Eternal Emerald Thread

by Tim Bohen

Ahead of the Heroes of Irish America Awards in Buffalo, NY, author Tim Bohen reflects on the city's storied Irish links.

Irish immigrants flocked to Buffalo due to the success of the Erie Canal. This canal transformed villages like Buffalo into thriving boomtowns and solidified New York's reputation as the Empire State. Buffalo's strategic location at the eastern end of Lake Erie generated thousands of waterfront jobs in the grain transshipment industry, as well as opportunities in building railroads, canals, and various infrastructure projects.

The Irish immigrants, in search of better prospects, seized many of these positions. Within a few generations, they not only built Buffalo but also claimed their stake in the American Dream.

From Buffalo's earliest days, the Irish and their descendants made a significant impact on the city. Samuel Wilkeson, the son of immigrants from Ulster, constructed Buffalo's harbor in 1821 and led the city's efforts to become the western terminus of the Erie Canal.

Irish canal workers blasted miles of solid stone north of Buffalo in Lockport, tackling one of the most challenging sections of the canal. In the 1840s and '50s, Irish American John Timon, Buffalo's first Catholic bishop, founded numerous charitable institutions with assistance from the Irish Sisters of Charity and the Mercy Sisters. Some of these charities still exist today.

Politicians played a crucial role in stabilizing many of Buffalo's Irish community by securing jobs for them as teachers, police officers, and firefighters. Buffalo's Irish politicians also made significant contributions at the state and federal levels. Kathy (Courtney) Hochul, the granddaughter of Irish immigrants, became New York State's first female governor. Paul Fitzpatrick of Buffalo, as the New York State Democratic Chairman, helped President Harry Truman secure the presidency in 1948. Without the backing of Buffalo Democratic Chairman Peter Crotty, John F. Kennedy might not have been the Democratic presidential nominee in 1960.

In the field of labor, Thomas V. O'Connor from Buffalo served as the president of the International Longshoremen's Association; Rowland Mahany was a U.S. Secretary of Labor; and Irish American James Mead, the only United States Senator from Buffalo, was a strong advocate for labor in Congress.

General William "Wild Bill" Donovan, who led New York's "Fighting 69th," was one of the most decorated soldiers of World War I. During World War II, he founded the OSS, which later became the CIA. Donovan is regarded as the "Father of American Intelligence." C. Wade McCluskey, a South Buffalo native, was one of the heroes of the Battle of Midway, a pivotal event that changed



Author Tim Bohen in his native Buffalo.

the course of the Pacific Campaign during World War II.

The Buffalo Irish contributed significantly to the cause of Irish independence. In 1866, the Fenians launched their attack against Canada from Buffalo, marking it as the most significant military campaign against British crown forces outside of Ireland in the country's struggle for independence. Over the years, Buffalo became one of the leading cities hosting national conventions for the Irish Land League, United Irish League (UIL), Clan Na Gael, and Sinn Féin. Buffalo also served as a major fundraising center for the Irish independence movement, with Charles Stuart Parnell, John Dillon, Michael Davitt, John Redmond, John Devoy, and Eamon de Valera all visiting.

In the arts, Chauncey Olcott became the greatest Irish singer of his time, celebrated for writing "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" and "My Wild Irish Rose" (above on YouTube) and for introducing many other songs that are now part of the Irish-American music canon.

Buffalo's Peggy O'Neil was one of the leading stars on the London stage in the early twentieth century, and Kitty O'Neil (no relation) was the top Vaudeville dancer of her time and a crowd favorite in New York City for two decades. First Ward native Michael Shea was a prominent figure in Vaudeville and built over a dozen entertainment venues, including Buffalo's most renowned theater, Shea's Buffalo. Billy Sheehan is considered

Tim Russert (Meet the Press) and Margaret Sullivan (New York Times and the Washington Post).

In sports, Buffalo Irish American Jimmy Collins, a Hall of Fame third baseman and team manager, led Boston to victory in the first-ever World Series in 1903. Buffalo has produced two world champion boxers, Jimmy Slattery and Jimmy Goodrich, as well as a three-time NHL Stanley Cup champion, Patrick Kane of the Chicago Blackhawks. Jim Kelly, who led the Buffalo Bills to four Super Bowls, is among the region's most philanthropic citizens. Emily Regan is the only Olympic gold medalist in rowing from Buffalo, and Irish American Mary Robertson Wittenberg significantly expanded the New York City Marathon during her tenure as CEO of the New York Road Runners.

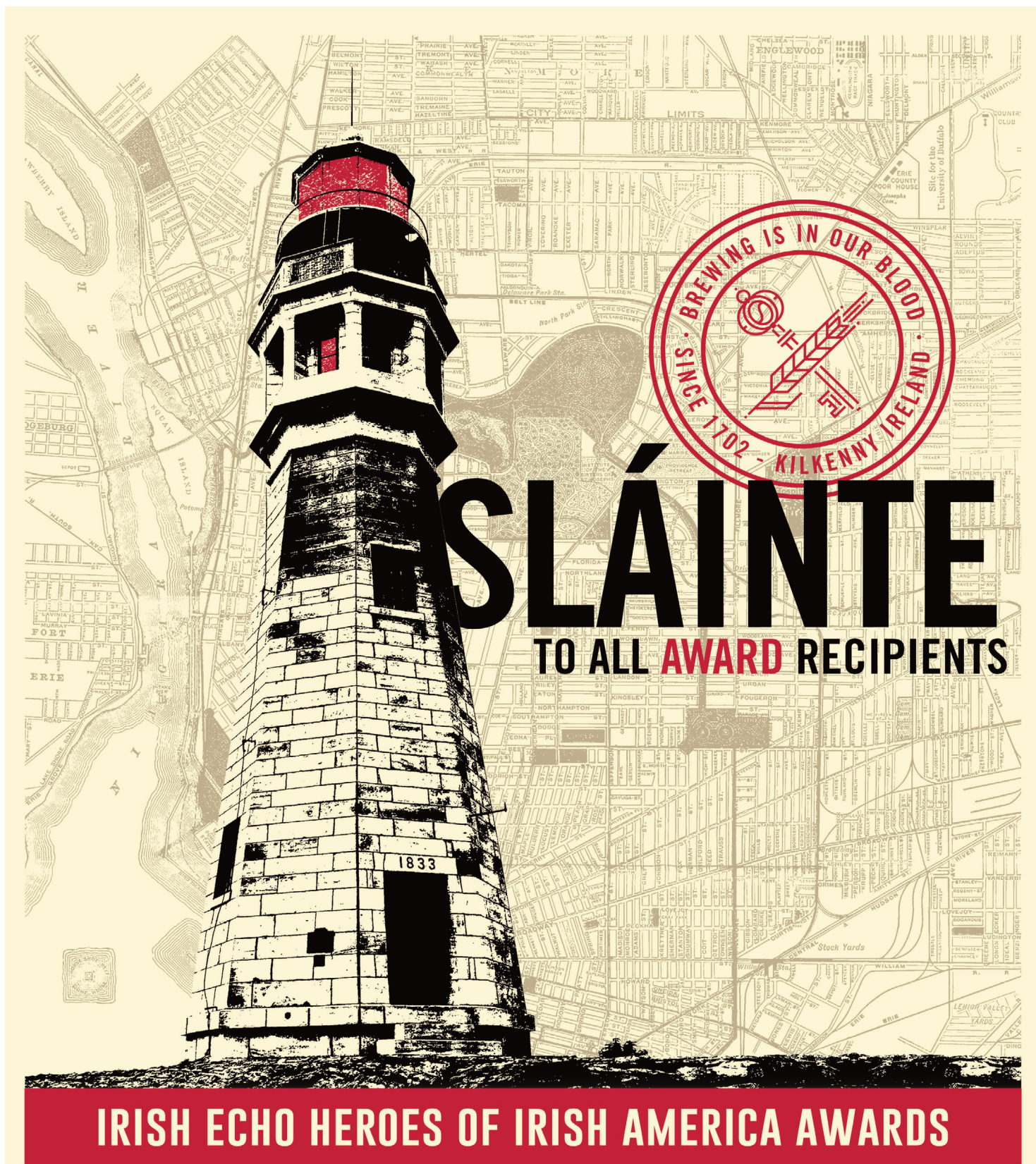
The world's largest collection of James Joyce materials is housed at the University at Buffalo, making it a favored destination for Irish dignitaries, actors, and poets. Thanks to Congressman Tim Kennedy and Governor Kathy Hochul, this collection will soon be housed in a \$10 million museum, ensuring that visitors continue to come to Buffalo for years to come.

The story of the Buffalo Irish is one of resilience, ambition, and lasting influence. As Buffalo continues to evolve, the Emerald Thread remains deeply woven into its fabric, serving as a testament to generations who have worked, fought, and dreamed of building a better future.

Tim Bohen is the author of *Emerald Thread: The Irish in Buffalo*, which can be purchased at the Dog Ears Bookstore in Buffalo or at Barnes & Noble online. More information about the title can be found at www.timothybohen.com. Tim can be emailed at tim@oldfirstward.com



The 'Capital of Irish America' CAPTURED BY ANIL BAKI DURMUS ON UNSPLASH.COM



SLÁINTE

TO ALL **AWARD** RECIPIENTS

IRISH ECHO HEROES OF IRISH AMERICA AWARDS

KILKENNY IRELAND
— EST.D 1702 —

SULLIVAN'S
BREWING COMPANY™

HEROES OF IRISH AMERICA AWARDS



Glenna Rankin

Place of birth: Buffalo, NY.

Profession and company: New York Power Authority.

How do you celebrate your Irishness? I dance with an incredibly whimsical and lively group at Rince Na Tiarna Adult Irish Dance! RNT Adults have built a nurturing and vibrant space for me to celebrate and honor my heritage. My friend and I also brought Jigs and Swigs to Buffalo which is an Irish dance inspired workout that hosts classes at local breweries. Being able to share my love of Irish dance and culture with my community brings me so much joy! I also love to cook traditional Irish American recipes! My mother's soda bread, corned beef and beef stew recipes are some of my favorites!

Name a hero you admire and why? My parents are my biggest supporters in every aspect of life. They are my foundation. They've always shown me what it means to be strong, imaginative and passionate. No matter what, they are always there with

endless love and a willingness to support the people they care about.

Something people would be surprised to know about me: In 2010, I won the Regional ESU Shakespeare Competition, earning the opportunity to perform at the National ESU Shakespeare competition at Lincoln Center in NYC. I am also certified in both basic armed and unarmed stage combat.

Glenna is a passionate dancer and advocate for Irish culture. She holds a Bachelor's degree in performing arts and has been dancing for over 25 years. Dedicated to building community through movement, she helped establish Jigs and Swigs in Buffalo, NY, blending fitness with traditional Irish dance. Beyond the studio, she volunteers as part of the planning committee for the Buffalo Irish Festival, helping to celebrate and preserve Irish heritage. With creativity, dedication and a love for the arts, she continues to inspire others through dance and community engagement.



Mark P Scanlon (EOW 11/06/2024)

Place of birth: Buffalo, NY

Profession and company: Erie County Sheriff Sergeant

Mark "Scanz" Scanlon

September 22, 1970 – November 6, 2024

Mark Patrick Scanlon, affectionately known as "Scanz" or "Marky" to his loved ones, was born on September 22, 1970, to John and Paula (Kuntz) Scanlon. One of seven siblings to John, Kara, Michael (Jeanne), Brian, Christopher (Katie), Patrick (Sinead), Mark's deep connection to his family and community shaped the person he became—loyal, kind, and with a generous spirit that knew no bounds.

Mark's professional journey began with the Buffalo Parks Department before transitioning to the State Office of Corrections. He ultimately found his calling with the Erie County Sheriff's Department, proudly serving as a Sergeant. Throughout his career, Mark made an indelible impact, always striving to support others and lead by example. He was embedded in the construct of ensuring staff members had a safe place to talk when tragedy or life's trials became overwhelming. Wanting to ensure that mental health was addressed and destigmatized, he worked alongside others in his profession to create a safe and confidential way to seek help.

A lover of life's simple pleasures, Mark was passionate about golf, hunting, and spending time outdoors. His heart was most full when surrounded by family and friends, whether cheering on his nieces and nephews at their sporting events or coaching youth hockey in his earlier years. He cherished his Irish heritage and took pride in being a vital part of his community. His roots stemmed from the First Ward where his father, John Scanoos Scanlon was raised. Although he never completed his dream to visit Ireland, he did celebrate his Irish heritage and had great pride in his lineage and Irish ancestors.

Mark's greatest joy, however, came from being a father to Connall Keane (Jessica) and a grandfather to Lyla and Weston Keane. He was a devoted husband and soulmate to Amanda Chauncey-Scanlon, his partner in every sense of the word. Together, they built a life full of love, laughter, and shared adventures.

Known for his boisterous nature, infectious laugh, and vibrant personality, Mark was a man who lit up any room he entered. Whether offering a hearty bear hug, raising a toast, or sharing a story, he created a fun and



welcoming atmosphere everywhere he went. His favorite response to a joke or playful chides was always the same: a joyful "BAM!" that would bring an even bigger smile to anyone nearby.

Mark was also known for his unique style—whether it was a visor, worn even in the dead of winter, or a cowboy hat for special occasions, he never did anything in a small way. Everything he did was over the top, from his larger-than-life personality to his exuberant presence at any event. His true pleasure came not from being the center of attention, but from watching others be happy, supporting them in ways that made them feel special and seen.

Mark had a rare gift: the ability to find and nurture the unique spark in others, helping them reach their fullest potential without ever expecting anything in return. A quiet supporter, Mark was the dependable "fix-it" guy the family could always count on, often working behind the scenes to ensure everything ran smoothly. His superpower, much like his hero Superman, was making people feel seen, valued, and loved, ensuring no-one is left behind. His loyalty, kindness, and unwavering support left a lasting imprint on all who knew him.

Mark was a giant man, not only in stature but in heart. He loved fiercely, laughed often, and lived life with a spirit that will never be forgotten. His legacy of love, laughter, and unwavering support will continue to inspire all who were lucky enough to know him.

Lauren Levitz

Place of birth: New York City

Profession and company: Middle School Science Teacher, Our Lady of Fatima

How do you celebrate your Irishness? I celebrate my Irishness by teaching the new generation all about the hardships the Irish have endured. Every year I dress up as a leprechaun for the elementary school students to believe in magic. I also incorporate it into my lessons as much as I can. I take big pride in being Irish and love to learn even more about my heritage.

Name a hero you admire and why? My older sister Megan Rose. She has so much love and passion in her heart. She works hard for everything that she earns and achieves. She has always been there for me growing up and supports everything I do. I am very lucky to have her in my life.

Something people would be surprised to know about me: I love to run! I run half marathons around NYC and even raised money for wonderful organizations like CaringKind which helps individuals with Alzheimer's.

Lauren was born and raised in NYC. Her mother was a nurse at Mt. Sinai, and father was in the NYPD for 38 years. She graduated with her Master's in education and became a teacher because she wanted to inspire students to change the world. She is married to her high school sweetheart, Alex Levitz, who has supported her throughout the years. She is a middle school science teacher at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Academy in Queens. In her free time, Lauren plays kickball with her friends and runs races!



Congratulations

Commander Edward Seebald

Founding President and CEO
of Seebald & Associates International

On receiving the

Guardian of the Ports Award

And all of the 2025 Heroes of Irish America honorees

Red Hook Terminals is a multi-faceted Terminal Operator, Stevedore and Cross Harbor Barge Operator with three facilities located within the Port of NY&NJ complex. With cargo handling capabilities second to none, Red Hook Terminals specializes in handling any size or type cargo. Whether it is a bulk commodity such as stone aggregates lumber, containers, refrigerated and frozen perishable commodities, heavy lift, autos and Hi/Heavy Ro/Ro and Lo/Lo, OOG or Special Project Cargo. Red Hook Terminals has the experienced personnel, facilities and equipment to provide outstanding, first class service to our customers in the heart of New York City or in Port Newark, NJ.



www.redhookterminals.com tg@redhookterminals.com 1 (908)-230-0182
Red Hook Terminals, 70 Hamilton Ave, Brooklyn, NY, 11231, USA

HEROES OF IRISH AMERICA AWARDS



Chelsea Gill-McCarthy

Place of birth: Buffalo, NY.

Profession and company: Owner, Anointed through Grace Incorporated

How do you celebrate your Irishness? I attend and support The Saint Patrick's Day parade every year in the city of Buffalo NY, support The Buffalo Fenians, and support local businesses that are Irish owned, like The Banshee Irish Pub.

Name a hero you admire and why? My brother Chad Gill, as he showed perseverance in following his passion since he was a young boy in wanting to serve his community. He became a volunteer firefighter at the age of 18, and took a job opportunity 11 years ago in which he moved for. He is currently Captain of The North Charleston Fire Department in North Charleston South Carolina, volunteers for Horry County Fire Department and is a lead instructor for On Scene Training LLC which provides different trainings for firefighters.

Chelsea Gill is the proud owner of Anointed through Grace Incorporated which assists those grieving in an integrative, holistic approach. Thirteen years ago, Chelsea's life changed forever when her daughter was born with a disability which catapulted her to research her condition and to find therapies that can assist, as there are no doctors local that treat it. Knowing there were no local support groups for her daughter's condition, she brought it upon herself to give back to the community in ways she could only hope others would do for her. Over the last 12 years Chelsea has devoted her time to the community with raising funds for local nonprofits through events, volunteering and sponsorships. She currently sits on The Board of Directors for The Firefighter Arno Memorial Foundation, volunteers for Tunnel to Towers Foundation, WNY Law Enforcement Helpline, Kaelys Kindness, Hope Rises, Bills Fan Thunder, and Sensational Fun.



Pat Costello

Place of birth: Utica, NY.

Profession and company: IBEW Local 43 (Retired)

How do you celebrate your Irishness? I am on the Board of Directors of The Irish Cultural Center of the Mohawk Valley and a thirty-year member of The John C Devereux Division of the AOH.

Name a hero you admire and why? I admire President Bill Clinton for all he did during the peace process in the North of Ireland.

Something people would be surprised to know about me: I was the Grand Marshal of the Utica St. Patrick's Day Parade in 2012 - a great thrill for my family.

Pat has held numerous positions in the labor community in Central NY, BOCES Advisory Board, numerous positions within the Whitestown Youth Associations, Irish Cultural Center Board Member, AOH member for over 30 years, Member of the IBEW for over 49 years, on his Local United Way Board for over 12 years, on the Boards of NYS United Way and NYS 211, on many other not for profit boards in the Utica area, volunteer and Area Coordinator for the Project Children Intern Program for 20 years, and proud father of four great kids and equally as proud of his four grandkids.

Edward P. Seebald

Place of birth: Mercy Hospital Buffalo NY.

Profession and company: Founder; Seebald & Associates International.

How do you celebrate your Irishness? In October 2011, my mother and I traveled to Ireland to explore our family heritage. I returned in 2018 with my son for a similar trip. Now, I am planning another visit with my wife and sister. I have visited many parts of Ireland and look forward to returning.

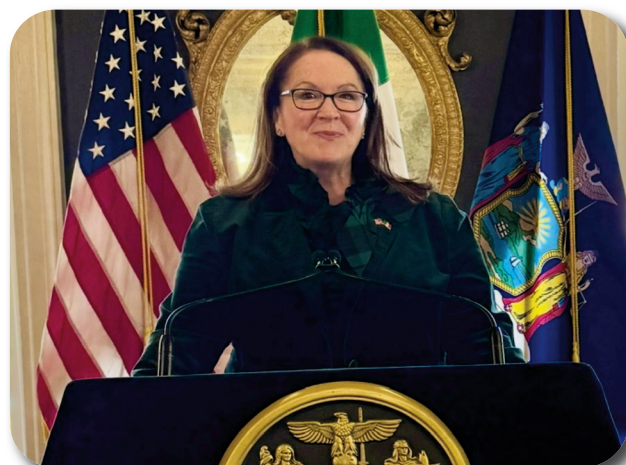
Name a hero you admire and why? The founding fathers of the United States, like Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Adams, sacrificed their wealth and faced threats to establish our nation. Their contributions laid the foundation for our freedoms today.

Something people would be surprised to know about me: I was raised in Irish South Buffalo along with my parents and seven siblings. With a large extended family, I had 62 first and second cousins residing in the same area, fostering strong familial connections. At the age of 18, I left home to attend the Coast Guard Academy. Notably, all seven of my brothers and sisters also served in the

United States Coast Guard. As the late Admiral Danielson stated "The Seebald Family is the largest single family ever to serve in One Armed Force." So the Kid from South Buffalo, graduated as Anchor Man and was subsequently stationed in Kodiak, Alaska. After 20 years of service, I retired and returned to western New York.

Ed Seebald, Founding President and CEO of Seebald & Associates International, has over 46 years of experience in maritime leadership and management. He graduated from the United States Coast Guard Academy with a B.S. in Management and completed post-graduate studies at the United States Naval War College.

Throughout his Coast Guard career, Commander Seebald was involved in national and international maritime security operations, including counter-narcotics activities and coastal facility command. After retiring in 2003, he founded Seebald & Associates (S&A), a maritime security consulting firm. His clients include ports such as NY/NJ, Tampa, Charleston, Port Everglades, and Beaumont, as well as major oil and gas companies and several LNG liquefaction terminals in the Gulf of America.



Denise Murphy McGraw

Place of birth: USA.

Profession and company: Hill, Gosdeck, McGraw & Nemeth.

How do you celebrate your Irishness? I am a proud member of the Irish American Heritage Museum board of directors and the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians JFK Division #1 Schenectady, NY.

Name a hero you admire and why? President Joe Biden who lives and uplifts his Irish heritage every day. One of my proudest days was being invited by President Biden to celebrate St Patrick's Day with a brunch at the White House to welcome the Irish taoiseach (prime minister).

Something people would be surprised to know about me... I have appeared in episodes of Succession, Billions, and Sex and the City

Denise Murphy McGraw is a nationally-recognized public policy advocate, small business owner, community volunteer, and nonprofit leader. Denise has helped craft laws to improve access to mental health care, increase arts funding, ensure healthy school air quality, combat problem gambling, and enact historic economic development policies.

In her community, Denise has created an award-winning school supply program, a healthy eating effort to combat childhood obesity, and an initiative to provide feminine hygiene products to food pantries and domestic violence shelters. During her free time, you can find Denise in the Bronx or at the Schenectady AOH watching her beloved Yankees.



SEEBALD & ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL

THE WORLD'S PREEMINENT
MARITIME SECURITY CONSULTING FIRM



**AT SEEBALD & ASSOCIATES, WE'RE IN THE BUSINESS
OF DELIVERING PEACE OF MIND TO OUR CLIENTS**

REDUCING BUSINESS RISK IN THE
MARITIME REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

www.Seebald.com

716-481-0195



HEROES OF IRISH AMERICA AWARDS

Michael Schilling

Place of birth: Boston, MA

Profession and company: Division President of the Father John Murphy Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, Inc. in Plymouth, MA.

How do you celebrate your Irishness? By being an active member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians

Name a hero you admire and why? My greatest heroes are my Irish grandmother and my Italian great-grandparents, all of whom were immigrants. Their strength, sacrifice, and unwavering determination to build a better life in a new country inspire me every day. They faced challenges with resilience and grace, holding tightly to their heritage while embracing the opportunities of America. Their stories remind me of the value of hard work, family, and pride in where you come from. I carry their legacy with me and strive to honor it in all that I do.

Something people would be surprised to know about me... That I recently started a new Irish Cultural podcast 'Craic on the Coast'

Michael Schilling, born in Boston, is the proud grandson of Irish immigrants and a dual citizen of Ireland and the United States. His Irish heritage has always been a guiding force in his life. A member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians for over 10 years, Michael currently serves as president of the Father John Murphy Division. Along with the division, he is dedicated to preserving and



celebrating Irish culture and the proud legacy of Irish Americans. Deeply committed to community, history, and tradition, they work tirelessly to keep Irish heritage alive on the South Shore. Michael lives in Plymouth with his wife, Megan, and their two children, Jack (12) and Maggie (8).

Griffin Family

Place of birth: Buffalo, NY.

Profession and company: 5 retired, 1 civil service, 1 pharmaceutical exec

How do you celebrate your Irishness? Food, drink, community

Name a hero you admire and why? Our Mom and Dad - they instilled a love of all things Irish and taught us about giving back to the community

Something people would be surprised to know about me: I don't like public speaking.

Bill and Ellie (Milligan) Griffin raised Mary Beth, Peggy, Colette, Kathy, Bill, Maureen, TJ, Jim and Julie on Parkview Avenue in South Buffalo. They instilled in them a core set of beliefs and led by example. When opportunities arose, the nine often stepped up in leadership roles in small but meaningful ways; years of support for the Community Table soup kitchen, the annual parish lawn fete. An annual December pub crawl has turned into a toy and cash drive benefitting the needy. Since 2009, the siblings (with community support) have fundraised over a half million dollars for Roswell Park Cancer Institute.



Maedhbh Fiona Mc Cullagh

Place of birth: Cavan, Ireland.

Profession and company: Director, Solas Nua Capital Irish Film Festival.

How do you celebrate your Irishness? I celebrate my Irishness through my work, presenting Irish artists and filmmakers in the US and showcasing the exceptional talent that is emanating from Ireland. I love Irish arts especially contemporary Irish work across all disciplines. I regularly attend events organized by the Irish community in NYC and stay up to date with Irish diaspora through reading the Irish Echo as well as other newsletters.

To keep up to date with what is happening at home in Ireland I read the Irish Times every day. I support Irish arts and crafts makers when I can and I love to speak and write my 'cúpla focal' as Gaelige which has led to a renewed love for the language and a drive to relearn it again. For me expressing my Irishness is a lived experience - it's about being open minded, tolerant, welcoming and compassionate. It's about fairness, equity, standing up for others and speaking out against injustices everywhere.

Name a hero you admire and why? Ireland's first woman President of Ireland, a UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Chair of The Elders; iconic change-maker Mary Robinson. She has been and continues to be an inspiration for my generation and women and girls of all ages. Her message of openness, equity, and tolerance is so needed, especially now.

She is a fearless advocate for justice and peace and through her work with Project Dandelion, she is leading the charge to engage women in the fight to combat the effects of climate change. She leads the way in convincing legislators to take the impending climate catastrophe seriously by enacting laws and developing



environmental policy that moves us away from dependence on fossil fuels. She is a woman of courage

and speaks truth to power but most of all she is a tireless and compassionate champion for the care of all human beings and our planet.

Something people would be surprised to know about me: I am a twin, the 7th daughter and the 9th child!

Maedhbh Mc Cullagh is an independent multidisciplinary cultural producer, arts programmer, and creative consultant from Ireland. For more than two decades she has been producing and managing artistic programs, presentations, productions, and special events for international festivals, cultural institutes, and organizations, in Europe and the US.

Through a broad range of arts leadership roles, in Dublin, New York, and Washington, D.C., she has centered contemporary Irish arts, culture, and diverse voices. She is the Director of Solas Nua's Capital Irish Film Festival and the U.S. creative producer for the Dublin-based interdisciplinary hub, The Trailblazery. Previously she was the Associate Director of Irish Screen America and worked as the Managing Director of the Henry Street Settlement's contemporary interdisciplinary Abrons Arts Center, NYC.

As an independent producer she has worked with an array of award-winning theater companies and cultural institutions including PS122, (now Performance Space NY), The Civilians Theater Company, The Foundry Theatre, the Alliance of Resident Theatres, Elevator Repair Service, American Opera Projects, Poets House, The Chocolate Factory, Restless Productions and Make Music New York. Before migrating to America, she was the Program Manager of the international Dublin Fringe Festival and Associate Producer of the award-winning Aurora Nova international program of physical theatre, dance, and cross-disciplinary performance at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Download FREE IrishEcho App on Apple Store



www.irishecho.com

Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Inc.

CELEBRATING THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF IRISH AMERICAN WOMEN SINCE
1894



WE ARE ESPECIALLY PROUD OF OUR SISTERS WHO
ARE HONORED TONIGHT:

MAUREEN MOHNEY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OH,
DIVISION 5 & 10

DENISE MURPHY MCGRAW - SCHENECTADY COUNTY,
NY, DIVISION 1

EILEEN O'MALLEY - ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PA,
DIVISION 21

DR. ELIZABETH STACK - ALBANY COUNTY, NY
DIVISION 1

SCAN TO LEARN MORE OR VISIT US:
LADIESAOH.COM



FRIENDSHIP, UNITY, & CHRISTIAN CHARITY

HEROES OF IRISH AMERICA AWARDS



Kate Shea Kennon

Place of birth: Buffalo, NY.

Profession and company: Assistant Dean, Fordham University.

How do you celebrate your Irishness? Beyond my allegiance to a good pint of Guinness, I celebrate my Irishness through a fervent and lifelong support of Irish culture and arts. Not to give away my age, but let's chat about U2 at Shea's Buffalo. The theater was never the same after, and neither was I.

Name a hero you admire and why? My heroes are Michael and Mary Griffin Shea, who left Annascaul, Co. Kerry in 1928 to make a better life for themselves and for us, the future generation. They sacrificed a great deal to educate their children (my father, James Patrick Shea - another hero!), and we, their grandchildren, reap the rewards of their efforts. I am a citizen of Ireland through the Irish government's Foreign Birth Registry, a policy of wisdom and foresight, and I feel as at home and invested there as I do in New York.

Something people would be surprised to know about me: This summer will be my third time riding my bicycle from Buffalo to Albany along the Erie Canal—360 miles. This year, the Erie Canal is celebrating its bicentennial, and I can't wait to celebrate this milestone with all the beautiful towns along the canal.

Kate Shea Kennon, Ed. D. is an Assistant Dean at Fordham University. She is an Executive Board Member of the Jesuit Business Network, which brings together Jesuit colleges from all over the U.S. to share best practices in student services. Kennon holds a doctorate in education from Fordham, an MA from Western Connecticut University, and a BA in English from St. Bonaventure University, where she co-leads a cycling club. She is proud to be a longstanding board member of the Origin Theater, which, since its inception in 2008, has introduced more than 400 Irish and Irish American playwrights to NYC.



Tim Bohen

Place of birth: Buffalo, New York.

Profession and company: Sales professional at Genentech.

How do you celebrate your Irishness? I am a member of the Blackthorns, an Irish-American social club that celebrates our Irish heritage throughout the year. I also have a deep love for live traditional Irish music, especially at the Banshee Irish Pub. For several years, I was fortunate to be part of a literary group where we read James Joyce's *Ulysses* and explored various other Irish writers and poets.

Additionally, I served on the board of the Irish Classical Theatre Company, which helped to nurture my passion for Irish theater. I also take great pride in sharing my knowledge of Buffalo's Irish community with audiences throughout Western New York.

Name a hero you admire and why? One of my heroes is my late grandfather, Dr. John McLaughlin. Raised in an orphanage for much of his youth, he overcame tremendous odds to put himself through Columbia Medical School. During World War II, he served with distinction as a surgeon with the Merrill's Marauders in the jungles of Burma. After the war, he dedicated his life to caring for others, both as a beloved neighborhood doctor and through his work at the VA Hospital in Buffalo.

Something people would be surprised to know about me: I studied at a Catholic seminary for a little over a year.

Tim was born in Buffalo into an Irish-American family, with all his ancestors having emigrated from Ireland in the 19th century. He has worked as a sales professional for over thirty years. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Kimberly, and writing about the Irish experience in Buffalo. His first book, *Against the Grain: The History of Buffalo's First Ward*, is in its eighth printing. His most recent book is *Emerald Thread: The Irish in Buffalo*. Tim has appeared in two PBS productions and on C-SPAN. His goal is to continue sharing the remarkable story of the Buffalo Irish for many years to come.



Elizabeth Stack

Place of birth: Co. Kerry.

Profession and company: Until recently the Executive Director American Irish Historical Society.

How do you celebrate your Irishness? As a recent immigrant, I feel like my Irishness is so integral to my daily life, that I don't consciously celebrate it! Aside from my work, where I honor and promote Irish culture and history every day, I cook shepherd's pie at home, drink Barry's Tea sometimes, and enjoy sampling Guinness in various bars around the city!

Name a hero you admire and why? Margaret Haughey. She was an immigrant woman whose family all died during the Yellow Fever epidemic in Baltimore in 1822, and then whose husband and baby died in New Orleans, in 1836. She then established a diary and bakery to feed New Orleans orphans, and helped to found several orphanages. She died in 1882 and a statue of her was erected in New Orleans. It is the first publicly erected statue of a woman in the United States, the first monument to an American female philanthropist, and the only known statue to a baker.

Something people would be surprised to know about me: I taught in the Emirati Airforce before I moved to New York!

Elizabeth Stack, PhD, until recently was the Executive Director of the American Irish Historical Society in New York City. Dr. Stack was also the executive director of the Irish American Heritage Museum in Albany, NY for six years before she took up the mantle at the Society. Before moving to Albany, she taught Irish and Irish American History and was Associate Director at Fordham University's Institute of Irish Studies. She completed her PhD at Fordham, writing about Irish and German immigrants in New York at the turn of the twentieth century, as they grappled with the immigration restriction movements of that time.

The IrishEcho *Congratulates*
OUR HEROES OF IRISH AMERICA



Is í ár dteanga féin í.
It's our language.

 Foras na Gaeilge

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH · BÉAL FEIRSTE · RÁTH CHAIRN · DÚN SEACHLAINN · GAOTH DOBHAIR

forasnagaeilge.ie

gaeilge.ie



HEROES OF IRISH AMERICA AWARDS



Irene Horgan, TCRG, ADCRG, Ph.D.

Place of birth: Connecticut
Profession and company: Director: Horgan Academy of Irish Dance and Author: "Celtic Connecticut Connections"

How do you celebrate your Irishness? I celebrate my Irishness by sharing Irish arts and culture with the next generation through Irish Dance education.

Name a hero you admire and why? The hero I admire is someone who was born of Irish immigrants and at the age of 16 lost her father who was born in Co. Kerry and raised in Co. Cork. Her hard-working mother was from Co. Leitrim. This hero of mine knew she had to accelerate her education in order to help her family during this difficult time. Her Mom encouraged her to love education. She graduated high school in three years, went on to college earning B.S., M.A., and J.D. degrees in the United States and a Ph.D. from the University College Galway, all by the age of 26. She has dedicated her



life to helping others in need and promoting Irish culture. She is an inspiring advocate and role model. I am humbled to call her my sister. My

hero is Attorney Maureen Horgan.

Something people would be surprised to know about me: I am the author of an award-winning Best-seller book entitled "Celtic Connecticut Connections" about Irish Traditional Dance between 1796 and 1921 with perspectives in history, culture, immigration, religion and academia.

Irene Horgan is the daughter of the late Maura (Gill) Horgan of Co. Leitrim and Jeremiah Horgan of Co. Kerry. She earned her Ph.D. from the University of Limerick, Ireland. Dr. Horgan has lectured as Adjunct Professor at Post University. She is a certified Irish dance teacher (TCRG) and adjudicator (ADCRG), and Director of Connecticut's Horgan Academy of Irish Dance. Irene will serve as Chairperson of the 30th annual Constitution State Feis at Quassy Amusement & Waterpark in Connecticut on August 30th. She is the award-winning author of a Best Seller book entitled "Celtic Connecticut Connections".



Robert Breen

Place of birth: Boston, MA.

Profession and company: Boston Fire Dept.

How do you celebrate your Irishness? Writing poetry about my heritage and support my Irish Center here in Portland, Maine

Name a hero you admire and why? Seamus Heaney, he showed me how to stand alone when facing insurmountable trouble. Seamus was honest, lighthearted, remarkable in persevering the truth with his poetry told with a slant, a grounded genius. In the famous meeting on the train with a Sinn Féin spokesman, Seamus writes of their encounter in the poem "Flight Path", his words that stayed with me for life, "If I do write something, whatever it is, I'll be writing for myself."

Something people would be surprised to know about me: A fireman who writes and loves poetry.

Born and raised in Boston, Breen dedicated decades to serving on the front lines as a Boston firefighter and District Inspector, a medal and awards recipient, before embracing his passion for writing. His celebrated poem, "The Eighth Circle," first published in The Harvard Summer Review, stands alongside award-winning works such as "The Reef" (Honorable Mention from Key West Poets & Writers), "Beyond Cold" (Margaret F. Tripp Poetry Award), "Deception Island" (published in Communion Arts Journal), and "The Boy Who Jumped Out of a Night Sky", (Boston Literary Magazine and The Big Table Publishing Company).

Eileen O'Malley

Place of birth: Pittsburgh, PA.

Profession and company: Operations Manager, University of Pittsburgh Press and Castle Shannon Borough Tax Collector

How do you celebrate your Irishness? I am very active in the LAOH and the Irish community. We march as a family in the St. Patrick's Day Parade each year in Pittsburgh. I have held many offices in the LAOH and was even co-chair of the AOH-LAOH National Convention in Pittsburgh. I have served and continue to serve on many committees in the Irish community.

Name a hero you admire and why? My hero is my father. He taught us to be kind and to never look down upon anyone. I remember him saying "everyone is the same from the janitor to the CEO and they all deserve your respect". He taught us all about our Irish heritage and took all of us on a trip to Ireland to meet our relatives. He was a good husband, father and grandfather. He had a fabulous sense of humor and there was always laughter in our house. I feel that I wouldn't be who I am today without his love and guidance.

Something people would be surprised to know about me: I am so organized that I label my labels.

Eileen is the fourth of five children born to Thomas and Kathleen Jean O'Malley. Her parents were very active in the Irish Community so they grew up knowing about their heritage and attending Irish events from when they were little. Her mother held offices at the Division, County and State Offices. Her father was one of the founders of his Division and was the Hibernian of the year in 1999, and Grand Marshall of the 2000 St. Patrick's Day parade.

Her grandfather Thomas as born in Carraroe, Connemara and her grandmother was born in Spiddal, County Galway.



Eileen is currently the Director of the Claddagh Degree team and holds offices at the Division and County levels. She has served on many Irish committees in Pittsburgh and was the co-chair of the 2022 AOH-LAOH National Convention held in Pittsburgh.

She is the Democratic Chair in Castle Shannon and the Tax Collector for the Borough of Castle Shannon and Keystone Oaks School District. She has been to Ireland six times to visit her family that still lives there. Her involvement in the Irish community is not just for her to learn more about her ancestors, but to pass her culture on to the next generation.



Download FREE IrishEcho App on Apple Store



Congratulations Eileen O'Malley

on receiving the
**2025 Heroes of
Irish America Award**
from your friends at the
University of Pittsburgh Press



Congratulations
PAT
COSTELLO



Comhghairdeas Pádraig Oisdealbhach



From your proud Irish friends and family in Utica, NY



HEROES OF IRISH AMERICA AWARDS



Thomas P. McDonnell

Place of birth: Buffalo, NY.

Profession and company: Executive Director, Enlightenment Bookstore & Literary Art Center, Inc. (DBA Dog Ears Bookstore & Cafe).

How do you celebrate your Irishness? Quietly with friends and literature, mythology and storytellers.

Name a hero you admire and why? Marcus Aurelius (He understood humanity).

Something people would be surprised to know about me: I'm taller in pictures.

Born in Buffalo in 1968 Thomas is the son of Kevin and Marguerite (Reilly) McDonnell. He spent his childhood learning life, love, loss, sports and friendship on the streets of South Buffalo. Thomas graduated from Bishop Timon High School and college followed with a degree from Buffalo State and then a Master's Degree from Canisius College. "My time at Canisius provided me the opportunity to engage in truly incredible learning."

He married his best friend and true love, Maureen Monahan, in January of



2000. They have been blessed with three beautiful and loving children, Catherine, Luke and Holly.

Patrick O'Brien

Place of birth: Pittsburgh, PA.

Profession and company: Retired from West View Water Authority.

How do you celebrate your Irishness?

Travelling to Ireland with friends and family and visiting friends there. Truly like taking first time travelers to Ireland. 24-year member of The Pittsburgh St. Patrick's Parade Committee, past chairman, current parade coordinator. Very involved with The Ancient Order of Hibernians, 27-year member, Past PA President, Past Allegheny Division 4, President. Enjoy Music at our Irish Pubs. Director in The Irish Society for Education and Charity and I'm also a member of The Irish American Unity Conference.

Name a hero you admire and why? My heroes are our US Military and Police Officers that keep our country safe.

Many of my family are veterans that I admire and respect for their service to our country.

Something people would be surprised to know about me: If it weren't for my wife's objections, I would move us into an off-grid cabin in the woods.



Son of Bill and Marion O'Brien. Married 43 years to The Love of My Life, Lynne McKelvey O'Brien. Proud Father of Bridget, Brendan, Sean and Corey. Happy Pappy to Aria, Hadley, Emmett, Brooks, Philip and Clara.

Megan Hayes

Place of birth: Buffalo, NY

Profession and company: Oncology Nurse Coordinator at Roswell Park

How do you celebrate your Irishness? One of my favorite ways to celebrate the Irish culture is by hosting the South Buffalo Irish Festival with my friends in South Buffalo Roots. It is a great way to celebrate our community with Irish music and dancing.

Name a hero you admire and why? Susan B. Anthony is considered a great hero to me because of her tireless advocacy for women's rights. She dedicated her life to fighting for women's right to vote and working to change laws that discriminated against women. Her efforts, along with others, ultimately led to women possessing the right to vote.

Something people would be surprised to know about me:

Most people are shocked when I tell them I am in an all-women's fantasy football league. The league is over a decade old and is named after one of my heroes! We are the Susan B Anthony Memorial Fantasy Football League. The name usually gets quite a laugh from others!



Megan is fortunate to be surrounded by the best family and friends a person could ask for. The support she receives from her husband, Matt, daughter, Bridgit, family and friends allow her the privilege of laughing every day!

Maureen Mohney

Place of birth: Cleveland, OH.

Profession and company: IT Systems Administrator for the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland.

How do you celebrate your Irishness?

In everyday activities, including participation with the Cleveland St. Pat's-St. Jarlath's GAA as a Board Member, Gaelic Footballer and Camogie Player; as a Deputy Director on the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee of the United Irish Societies of Greater Cleveland; and active membership with the LAOH Our Lady of the Rosary Division, the Irish American Club - East Side and West Side Irish American Club. I also enjoy Irish foods, music and traveling to Ireland.

Name a hero you admire and why? My mom, of course! It wasn't always easy, but the sacrifices she made throughout the years surrounding home, school and work shaped me and my siblings to the strong, independent people we are today with a deep connection to our Irish heritage.



Maureen is a lifelong Cleveland, active in the Irish community as a member of the Cleveland GAA, the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee, LAOH and local Irish American Clubs. Maureen joined St. Pat's GFC in 2001 and is still an active player and board member with Cleveland St. Pat's-St.

Jarlath's GAA, always recruiting players and social members to grow the GAA Community.

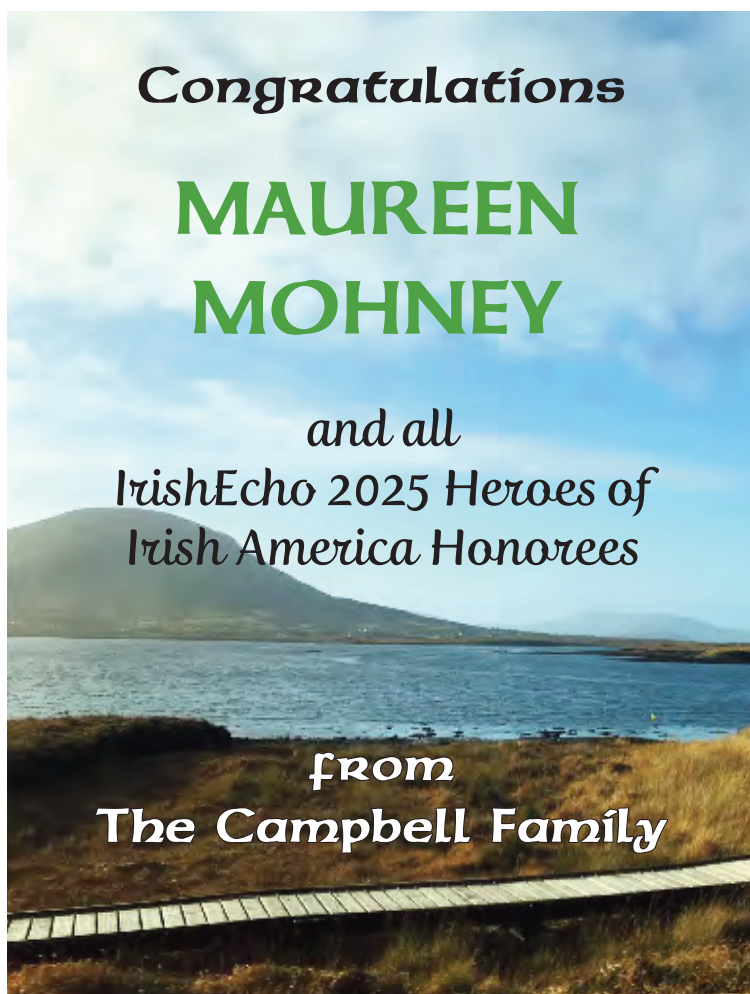
Maureen joined the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee in 2002 as a Delegate for the Cleveland GAA; and was invited to become a Deputy Director in 2016, serving as Secretary and maintaining the Committee's IT needs.



Download FREE IrishEcho App on Apple Store



www.irishecho.com



Congratulations

**MAUREEN
MOHNEY**

and all
**IrishEcho 2025 Heroes of
Irish America Honorees**

from
The Campbell Family

Pride of Erin

12228 Lorain Ave.
Cleveland, Ohio

Your Neighborhood Irish Pub
Since 1982

Home of the Perfect Pint



HEROES OF IRISH AMERICA AWARDS



Michael Meade

Michael Meade is the founder and CEO of Sullivan's Brewing Company in Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny, which has the inspiring ambition of making its mouth-watering beers, ales and stouts Ireland's next great export. A native of Buffalo, NY, Mike has built a powerhouse business from the bottom up, taking on the global drinks giants and beating them at their own game with his authentic brand and award-winning libations. You can hear more about Mike's transforming impact on Ireland's famed beer market, his support for Irish sporting clubs across the U.S. and his entrepreneurial can-do spirit on the Irish Stew podcast.



Josh Byrne

Profession and company: Pro Lacrosse Player Buffalo Bandits

How do you celebrate your Irishness? At the Banshee

Name a hero you admire and why? My wife - she's amazing

Something people would be surprised to know about me: I love real estate

Josh Byrne, 31 from Vancouver, Canada. Half Irish half Trinidadian. Played lacrosse since I was 3. Went to Hofstra University.



Ellen N McHugh

Place of birth: NYC, NY.

Profession and company: Parent Information and Referral, AHRC NYC.

How do you celebrate your Irishness? Every day - with some wit, some humor and some resignation.

Name a hero you admire and why?

Aside from my parents, who came to this country as kids to live in Brooklyn with Aunts and Uncles that they had never met: Ruth Hoffman my 6/ 7 grade teacher. She had a class of over 40 squirming and questioning pre-teens from every sort of background.

Mrs. Hoffman helped one very shy and ungainly girl to gain the confidence to learn. In her class learning wasn't reduced to the ABCs of a standard curriculum but it was reaching out to

try. It was probably one of the greatest, if not the greatest, lesson I ever learned.

Something people would be surprised to know about me: As a child my sisters and I danced on the old television show, The Children's Hour. I was no Ginger Rodgers but I had aspirations!

Ellen was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY by Irish immigrant parents; her mother from Bansha in Tipperary and father from Bree, in Wexford. She was one of seven children, only four lived to adulthood. Downtown Brooklyn was home territory, not far from the Atlantic Avenue docks. It was a working-class neighborhood of Irish, Arabic, Native American and Spanish families. Her parents were clerks and store owners, city workers and school

aides, dock workers and bridge workers.

She met her husband John McHugh in 1971 and were married in 1972. They have three sons and now have four grandchildren. They have lived in Bay Ridge in Brooklyn since marriage.

Their oldest son, who is deaf, is the impetus for her avocation as an advocate for children with disabilities. She is passionate about providing parents of individuals with special needs information and resources to support themselves and other parents as they advocate for their children.

She has served as a representative on various NY State task forces, as the Public Advocate's appointee to the Citywide Council on Special Education and currently on the NYC Dept. of Education Task Force to Reimagine Special Education Services.

Kathleen Barry Kane

Place of birth: Buffalo, New York.

Profession and company: Vice President/Branch Manager BankonBuffalo.

How do you celebrate your Irishness? With family and friends and lot of Irish music, Irish food and green beer.

Name a hero you admire and why? My late brother Kevin Barry, known for his kindness, generosity, and boundless care for others. Kevin left us far too soon, but his spirit continues to inspire me every day.

Something people would be surprised to know about me: When traveling abroad I got locked in a stairwell in Stuttgart Germany.

Kathleen Barry Kane, Vice President and Commerical Branch Manager, a dedicated leader in the banking industry with over 41 years of experience. In 2016, She was the 2nd employee recruited to help launch a new banking

division in Buffalo. Just eight years later, the bank has grown into one of the top five in the region, a testament to her leadership, commitment and expertise. Throughout her career, she has helped countless individuals and new businesses reach their financial goals, including one success story that led to a visit from the President Obama.

Kathleen is a graduate of Canisius College with a Bachelor of Science in Business Management. Outside of work, she has dedicated much of her time to community service. She has been involved in the East Aurora Boys and Girls Club and recently inducted in their Wall of Fame. She is also very active in the Rotary Club of Orchard Park, serving as treasurer.

She resides in East Aurora, NY with her husband 100% Irish-American James B Kane and the proud mother of two grown children, James B Kane, IV and Kelsey M Kane.





JOHN GARCIA

Congratulations to all of the Irish Americans being honored tonight. A special posthumous congratulations to Sergeant Mark Scanlon who I had the privilege to get to know. Your loyal, kind and heartfelt nature will be greatly missed.

-Sheriff Garcia

Congratulations Chelsea!

Thank you for all of your hard work in WNY!



www.FAMgives.org

HEROES OF IRISH AMERICA AWARDS



Lea Walsh

Place of birth: Kiltimagh County Mayo.
Profession and company: Director of Customer Experience at CIE Tours.

How do you celebrate your Irishness? I celebrate my Irishness every day - through my work, my community involvement and how I raise my children. I take pride in sharing Ireland's rich cultural history.

Name a hero you admire and why? My parents, family first, hard work, and resilience through tough times have shaped the person I am today.

Something people would be surprised to know about me: I own more than one pair of cowboy boots; I'm a country girl at heart.

Born and raised in Kiltimagh, County Mayo, Lea lived in New Jersey since 2000 and is the proud mother of two amazing humans. She serves as the Director of Customer Experience at CIE Tours, a premier travel company offering expertly guided vacations to Ireland and beyond. Heading up their international internship program, she mentors young Irish students gaining valuable work experience in the U.S.

Passionate about fostering connections and cultural pride, she is proud to serve on the Morris County St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee, helping celebrate and promote Irish heritage in our community.



John D. Bowers

Place of Birth: Cleveland, OH.

Profession and Company: Pubican, Mullarkey's Irish Pub.

How Do you Celebrate Your Irishness? By sharing Irish culture with the community on a daily basis through the uniqueness of our Irish Pub.

Name a Hero You Admire and Why? My hero is my wife Eileen Mullarkey Bowers. She had a remarkable career in education. Starting as a tutor, by the time she retired she was the assistant superintendent of the Willoughby-Eastlake Schools—one of the largest school districts in the state of Ohio.

Something People Would be Surprised to Know About Me: I coached High School Football in Ohio on and off for the last 40 years.

Born in May 1954, John's father was a pipefitter and mother a homemaker. He was the oldest of five children. Irish culture was important in his family. He graduated from the University of Dayton in 1976, and taught school for a few years before moving to medical sales for the next 19 years. His father-in-law, John Mullarkey, was visiting from Philadelphia in 1994. He liked Irish music and found there were no Irish music venues on the East Side of Cleveland. That prompted an idea which became Mullarkey's Irish Pub. John's wife Eileen and his sons Brendan, Kevin and Trevor have been operating Mullarkey's Irish Pub for the last 29 years. They have Irish music every Saturday Night.



Mary Rose O'Shea

Place of birth: Chicago, Illinois.

Profession and company: Teacher, Chicago Public Schools

How do you celebrate your Irishness? I celebrate my Irishness by carrying forward the values my grandmother and other family members modeled: resilience, wit, resourcefulness, and a deep commitment to community, justice, and education. Growing up, my grandmother took my brothers and me to Ireland each summer, where we stayed on our great-uncles' farm just outside Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh.

These formative experiences in 1990s Northern Ireland profoundly shaped my understanding of people, place, and identity — as well as the importance of community, dialogue, and forgiveness. Both my personal and professional lives have been directly influenced by these experiences.

At home in Chicago, I continue to honor my Irish heritage through music, education, cultural events, and storytelling. I learned fiddle through schools like the Keane Academy of Irish Music and the Academy of Irish Music, and studied Irish step dancing with the Trinity Irish Dance Academy. While at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, I co-founded a student organization dedicated to traditional Irish culture, through which I led weekly slow sessions and played with a performance group.

Today, I continue to attend plays and concerts, and play fiddle as time allows. Just this March, I joined my brother to play a few tunes and demonstrate a few steps for our nephews' classes on St. Patrick's Day. My brothers and I are also part of a research team focused on documenting the history of Irish dance halls in Chicago. To me, Irishness is not just about ancestry — it's about carrying forward values, nurturing community, and finding strength and wisdom in stories, both inherited and shared.

Name a hero you admire and why? I admire my paternal grandmother, Lilian Brigid O'Shea (née



Campbell), a fiercely independent woman whose life spanned both continents and eras. Born on a farm in Fermanagh in 1912, she, like so many others, left home to find work. After passing the Civil Service Exam and moving to London, she served under Sir Anthony Eden, working with the British Foreign Office during the Blitz and later completing a stint in Moscow. She was present for numerous major historical events of the era,

including the Tehran Conference, though her role remains largely unknown due to the Official Secrets Act.

After marrying (and subsequently leaving the civil service), she moved to Montreal, where my father was born, and eventually to Chicago, where she worked for the Board of Education and participated in a variety of Irish cultural events and organizations, including the Council for Irish Arts. She was feisty, faithful, and fiercely practical — she took me to Mass nearly every Sunday during elementary school, brought us to Ireland in the summers, and invested in savings bonds that later helped pay for our college educations. She taught me to always go a step further — to reach for the next goal, especially as a woman; to place enormous value on family and history; and to find joy and adventure in life, no matter the historical or social context.

Something people would be surprised to know about me... I performed the Irish fiddle solo for President Mary Robinson at the Irish American Heritage Center during her 1991 visit to Chicago — but I never actually got to meet her. My dad had been part of a delegation that met her earlier in the day and couldn't get into the auditorium to join my mom and great-aunt. Little did I know, he was watching proudly from behind the curtains the whole time!

Mary Rose O'Shea is a National Board-Certified English language arts teacher, reading specialist, and instructional coach at Mather High School in Chicago. A proud graduate of Chicago Public Schools, she brings over two decades of classroom experience, school-based leadership, and service as a union delegate to her work as a literacy leader and advocate for equitable public education. She is currently a doctoral candidate in Literacy, Language, and Culture at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where her research focuses on teacher development, professional learning, and preservice teacher mentorship. She is also the founder of ChiPraxis, LLC, an educational tutoring and consulting company committed to advancing literacy, teacher research, and professional development.

CIE Tours Congratulates Lea Walsh – A 2025 Hero of Irish America



We're honored to celebrate our very own Lea Walsh, selected as one of the Irish Echo's 2025 Heroes of Irish America.

A proud native of County Mayo, Lea has spent more than 25 years in the U.S. sharing her love of Irish culture and community. As Director of Customer Experience at CIE Tours—the leader in guided travel to Ireland—she brings the warmth of Irish hospitality to life every day.

Lea also leads our internship program, providing third-year university students from Ireland with a transformative, year-long paid experience in the U.S. More than a program leader, she's a mentor and a guide—offering professional support, personal encouragement, and a little taste of home to students living abroad.

Beyond the office, Lea is a tireless advocate for Irish culture—whether helping organize the Morris County St. Patrick's Day Parade or uplifting young Irish talent. Her love for all things Irish is infectious, and her dedication runs deep.

We're thrilled to see her honored, and proud to call her part of the CIE Tours family.

Sharing the magic of Ireland for more than 90 years.
Plan your journey with the experts at www.cietours.com

Guided Vacations to Ireland, Britain, Iceland, Italy, and Spain



HEROES OF IRISH AMERICA AWARDS

Neil F. Cosgrove

Place of birth: New York, New York.

Profession and company: Software Engineer, ActiveViam.

How do you celebrate your Irishness?

By my membership in the Ancient Order of Hibernians, where we work to preserve our history, defend our faith, and promote Irish American heritage. I hold the roles of National Political Education Chair, Irish American Heritage Month Chair and Anti-Defamation Chair. I am also a retired Irish Dancing Feis father to my daughter and a currently active GAA supporter of my grandson.

Name a hero you admire and why? The Irish family. Across generations, it's been the backbone of our identity, preserving faith, culture, and values through famine, persecution, and immigration. Even a casual student of Irish history will recognize that the continued existence of the Irish identity is nothing short of a miracle; a miracle too often taken for granted. The Irish family passed down our stories, kept our traditions alive, taught us who we are, and has produced extraordinary individuals with astonishing regularity.

Something people would be surprised to know about me: My technical background and I've worked on defense projects I still can't tell you about :-)

Neil Cosgrove has served the Irish American community through his work with the Ancient Order of Hibernians, focusing on promoting Irish

history, culture, and the contributions of Irish Americans. He coordinates the Order's Irish American Heritage Month program, which this year reached over one million viewers and brought overdue recognition to the legacy of Irish Americans. He is currently working to ensure the United States continues to support the Good Friday Agreement, including calls to renew the position of Special Envoy to Northern Ireland. A Rockland County resident, he's grateful to give back to the community and heritage that shaped him.



Read the latest news, commentary, business, arts and entertainment, and sports from Ireland and Irish America on your desktop, tablet or phone

DOWNLOAD FREE IRISH ECHO APP ON APPLE STORE

www.irishecho.com

Tariffs Also Tax Identity

By Neil Cosgrove

On Saturday mornings in cities like Boston, Chicago, and New York, you'll see kids in oversized helmets and colorful jerseys sprinting across fields, swinging crooked wooden sticks called hurleys, and chasing a small leather ball known as a sliotar.

To the uninitiated, it might look like organized chaos with a whistle. But for Irish American families, it's much more than that—it's a living connection to home, history, and heritage. Run entirely by volunteers, the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) and the sports it supports, hurling, Gaelic football, and camogie, are more than games. For those who participate, they are family.

Yet with the stroke of a pen, President Trump has made participation in this century-old tradition 20% more expensive—piling pressure onto families already stretched thin and forcing some to choose between eggs and sliotars.

All the equipment used in Gaelic games is made in Ireland. No U.S. company makes the balls, equipment, or the distinctive jerseys. The idea that tariffs will spark a U.S. based Gaelic games industry is about as realistic as expecting American farmers to grow bananas.

The damage doesn't stop at the sideline. These tariffs touch nearly every

thread of Irish-American cultural life. They hit the Irish gift shop, where people buy Claddagh wedding bands or their child's first pair of Irish dance shoes. They hit the local Irish café, where customers seek out Barry's Tea, Tayto Crisps, and brown bread mix for a taste of home. And it hits the local pub, the social heart of many Irish American communities, where new births are toasted, and old friends are mourned.

No one can dispute that American companies, particularly the pharmaceutical and technology industries, have moved operations overseas in search of greener, lower-tax Irish pastures, taking thousands of American jobs with them. But tariffs, by definition, are blunt tools. Even if the target is just the innocent are caught in the fallout. However, taxing "Taytos" Aran sweaters and tin whistles does not fix the systemic tax issues that caused "the Flight of CEOs."

Tariffs are a blunt weapon that hurt

Main Street as much as Wall Street. The people getting hurt aren't the hedge fund managers on the golf course, but the camogie players on the

Street businesses, and heritage.

If negotiation could end the thirty years of the real war of the Northern Ireland conflict, then surely the same spirit and process can be applied to avoid a trade "war." It is time for all sides to step away from the microphones, end the "can you top this" sound bites, and get around the negotiating table.

The U.S., Ireland, and the E.U. need to stop the pregame interviews and trading "bulletin board" material, lace up their boots, and get into the game to solve the real issues fairly and equitably.

Because this isn't just about trade. It's about identity, community, and the next generation of Irish Americans chasing a sliotar across a muddy pitch while preserving an identity.

Neil Cosgrove is National Political Education Chair for the Ancient Order of Hibernians.



pitch. For millions of Irish Americans, these aren't niche traditions. They're part of their American story.

It's time for the U.S., Ireland, and the broader E.U. to come to the table and find an equitable solution that resolves the specific issues of trade imbalance and tax avoidance without collateral damage to cultural identity and working-class families, Main

HELP US SUPPORT LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES



is looking for
sponsors to donate
per mile for their

WALK *for* HUNGER



miles in 6 days

*Roscommon
to Dublin*



a fundraiser for the
HIBERNIAN HUNGER
project



VENMO



VENMO

IRISH ECHO HERO OF IRISH AMERICA

NEW POETRY FROM **ROBERT BREEN**

CLEAR-EYED, HONEST, AND DEEPLY HUMAN.

SHORE DIGGER



A COLLECTION OF POEMS BY
ROBERT BREEN

A powerful collection from Boston firefighter and poet Robert Breen, exploring Irish heritage, immigrant roots, and working-class life with lyrical grace and hard-earned wisdom, shaped in part by his friendship with poet Seamus Heaney.

THE LIGHT OF CIVIL DAY



ROBERT BREEN

Poems of memory, loss, and resilience from Irish-American poet Robert Breen, tracing moments of grace and connection from the streets of Boston to the shores of Maine.

ORDER NOW ONLINE OR IN SELECT INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORES.
FOR BULK OR EVENT INQUIRIES: INFO@CASCOBAYCELTICPRESS.COM

Congratulations!

Lea Walsh

on your recognition as a

Hero of Irish America

from your friends at

The St. Patrick's Day
Parade of Morris County



HEROES OF IRISH AMERICA AWARDS

Continued from page 2

Joyce's stock had risen by 1959 when an offer of \$55,510 was made to his most vital friend in Paris, Sylvia Beach. In June of that year, she traveled to Buffalo to be conferred with an honorary doctorate in recognition of her courage in publishing "Ulysses." Later that summer, the latest installment for UB's James Joyce Collection was placed on the "Queen Elizabeth," and Beach insisted that Dr. Silverman travel with it across the Atlantic rather than fly.

In the same year, New Yorker B.W. Huesch, publisher of the first edition of "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" and a Joyce associate, donated the second of his significant installments for the UB James Joyce Collection; the first was in 1951. His company, which merged with Viking in 1925, was also the first American publisher of "Dubliners," "Exiles" and "Chamber Music."

Another installment followed upon Beach's death in 1962, with the help of American benefactors.

And finally, again from Paris, in 1968, Maria Jolas, one of the friends who'd put together the Librarie La Hune exhibition, provided the 1927-28 galley proofs of the serialized publication of "Finnegans Wake" as "Work in Progress" in her and her husband Eugene Jolas's experimental magazine "transitions." The galley proofs are heavily revised by Joyce.

Maynard has written, "Also included [in the materials from the Paris bookstore owner] is one of the great association copies: copy number 2 of the first edition of 'Ulysses,' signed and inscribed by Joyce 'To Sylvia Beach in token of gratitude James Joyce Paris 13 February

1922,' bound by Beach in blue Morocco (to approximate the color of the French paper wrappers) along with Joyce's poem of appreciation and homage, 'Who is Sylvia,' written after William



Dr. James Maynard, curator of the UB Poetry Collection, pictured with family portraits from the James Joyce Collection in the background.

Shakespeare's lines beginning 'Who is Sylvia' in 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona.'"

The Poetry Collection curator's history at UB goes back to the summer of 2001 when he enrolled to do a PhD in the Poetics Program. Previously, Maynard did a master's in contemporary poetry at Temple University, and prior to that had

taught high-school English for two years. In 2007, he completed his doctoral degree in English, with a specialty in 20th century American poetry, and a particular focus on the works of the poet Robert Duncan.

In his early UB years, he began working in the Poetry Collection and through that its James Joyce Collection. "I fell in love with it as a graduate student and have had the good fortune of continuing to work in it ever since," said Maynard, who grew up outside of Philadelphia.

He was particularly drawn to Joyce's life, his writing processes, his role in international modernism and the support network of people around him like Beach.

"It's fascinating to hear everyone's story when they come to the collection, whether it's for research, whether it's for a community tour, to hear what draws them to Joyce," he said.

"There are just countless stories of writers and artists and readers who have fallen in love with Joyce, particularly with 'Ulysses' and to a lesser degree sometimes 'Finnegans Wake,'" said Maynard, who was appointed UB Poetry Collection curator in 2016, having previously held other positions at the institution. "They've become lifetime books, they've become touchstones. Both books reward continual readings throughout one's life.

"The people who come here are drawn to one of two different facets of the collection," he said. "On the one hand, people are drawn to the historical artifacts that were part of his life. Whether that be his canes, his passport, his glasses, the things that he owned and used in everyday life. And they do quite a remarkable

job of humanizing him, of showing what he was like as a person, as a son, as a brother and as a father.

"But, I think, if I had to choose," he said, referring to the other facet, "It would be his notebooks, his manuscripts, in particular for 'Ulysses' and 'Finnegans Wake.' They truly capture his writing process, which for both of those books was extremely complicated and complex."

Maynard said, "A lot of people come here who are interested in Joyce, but in a purely non-academic way, [and] might not have even read much Joyce. But for whatever reason, oftentimes because of their Irish heritage, they recognize Joyce as a connection to something larger and more significant than themselves, and they want to experience it."

Larger than everyone is the mural of James Joyce in Downtown Buffalo, created almost as a statement of intent in 2021, something tangible on bricks and mortar, while UB put a plan together that included, in addition to a permanent exhibition space, a guarantee of the James Joyce Collection's growth through a preservation and acquisitions endowment, a James Joyce curator, and programming and exhibition funds.

In an essay for the 2022 book accompanying the Morgan Library and Museum's centenary exhibition on "Ulysses" in New York City, Maynard wrote of the university's ambitious vision, "In this pursuit our aim is nothing less than to invite the entire world to experience the literary life and works of Ireland's James Joyce while ensuring the continuation of the UB James Joyce Collection as an international destination for research and discovery."

Congratulations Kathy Barry Kane

on being recognized as a recipient
of the **Capital of Irish America Award**,
honoring your remarkable achievements
and contributions to the community.



Kathy Barry Kane, BankOnBuffalo
VP/Commercial Office Manager



Thank you to the Irish Echo for choosing Buffalo, the Capital of Irish America, to host your Heroes of Irish America Awards for the second year in a row! Congratulations to all of tonight's honorees – we thank you for all you do for Buffalo and Irish culture!

Timothy M. Kennedy

 KENNEDYFORUSCONGRESS.COM

 [/KENNEDYFORCONGRESS](https://KENNEDYFORCONGRESS)

 @KENNEDYFORNY26

 @KENNEDYFORNY26



Paid for by Kennedy for Congress

Congratulations to **PAT COSTELLO** *on this well-deserved honor!*



In solidarity,
Your brothers and sisters of the Central New York Labor Council

50 years
SAVE THE DATE
PROJECT CHILDREN
MOVE TO MONAGHAN PEACE CAMPUS
50th Anniversary Celebration



Dates: Tuesday October 7 – Saturday 11, 2025
Monaghan Town, Co. Monaghan, Ireland

Scan the QR code for accommodations and event calendar



LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR "MOVE TO MONAGHAN" PEACE CAMPUS
AT PROJECTCHILDREN.ORG

*Project Children proudly
congratulates this year's recipients
of the 'Heroes of Irish America
Awards 2025'*

**With a special mention to our good
friend and Project Children Intern
Coordinator – Pat Costello**

Congratulations, Pat, on this well-deserved recognition. We thank you for your dedication, passion, and tireless commitment to Project Children. We are especially delighted that you will be joining us in Co. Monaghan this October, as we celebrate Project Children's 50th Anniversary and honor the volunteers who have made our mission possible.

Project Children Greenwood Lake, NY 10925
Visit www.projectchildren.org
e-mail: projectchildren@optonline.net

Congratulations to this years Awardees at the Heroes of Irish America Awards 2025

*A special congratulations to
IBEW Local 43 retiree,*

Patrick Costello

IBEW

**International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
Local Union #43**

Alan Marzullo.....Business Manager
Patrick Harrington.....President
Raymond Tucker.....Vice President
Nicholas Butchko.....Recording Secretary
Brian Sturges.....Treasurer



Executive Board

Jeffrey Cassano, Chairman

Darryl Elliott • Brandon Isaacs • Deborah Kopec
Timothy Lazore • Dustin Morgan • William Towsley

4568 Waterhouse Road • Clay, New York 13041
315-422-0435 • www.ibew43.org



Ancient Order of
HIBERNIANS
Irish • Catholic • American



Neil Cosgrove



Patrick O'Brien



Mike Schilling



Pat Costello

The AOH salutes the unsung heroes of Irish America -
ordinary people, doing extraordinary work
to build stronger communities.

We are proud to congratulate our proud Hibernians and unsung heroes:
Neil Cosgrove, Patrick O'Brien, Mike Schilling, and Pat Costello.

We especially acknowledge Neil Cosgrove,
an AOH National Board member, on his recognition as the
Truth Teller award.

Members of The Ancient Order of Hibernians in America.
The Ancient Order of America is the only Irish organization
with members in all 50 States.



Sean Pender, National President
Liam McNabb, National Vice President
Ray Lynch, National Secretary
Daniel Devinney, National Treasurer

