



Preserving Our Heritage, Sharing Our Stories

The Newsletter of the
Irish American Archives Society of Cleveland & Northeast Ohio

Volume 16, Number 1 Winter 2013

Save the Date!

Annual Walks of Life
Awards Dinner
Honoring

Christopher M. Connor
Dan Coughlin
Sr. Susan Durkin, OSU
Judge Richard J. McMonagle

February 28, 2013
Holiday Inn – Independence

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Walks of Life Honorees



Chris Connor recalls his first trip to Ireland in 1999. It was a one-day business trip and the chief executive of Cleveland-based Sherwin-Williams Company was on a tight schedule.

Halfway through the morning, his Dublin sales manager, Patrick Brynes, suggested they stop at a pub. Connor thought drinking during work hours was not an efficient way to get work done. When Brynes once again suggested they stop at a pub, Connor started to wonder if this was the way the sales manager's day usually went.

Finally at noon, Brynes again suggested that they stop at a pub. Connor told the sales manager that he would real-

ly like to gather the sales team together for a meeting.

"That's what I'm trying to tell you, Chris" Brynes said. "They're in the pub waiting for you."

Thus was Connor's introduction to business in Ireland.

"You gain such an appreciation for the collegiality and warm spirit of the Irish when you're in their country" Connor said. "I've never walked out of an Irish pub without having made five new best friends."

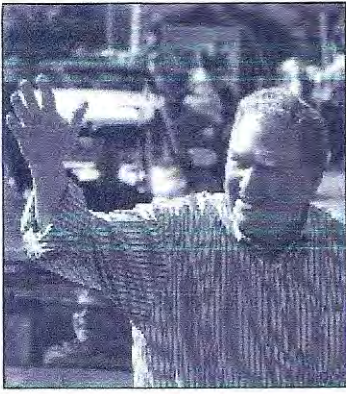
The 56-year-old chief executive is looking forward to many more trips to Ireland now that Eaton Corporation, on whose board Connor sits, has taken over an Irish company and will hold many of its future board meetings on the Emerald Isle.

Connor's father, Michael James Connor, known as "Irish Mike," was senior vice president of marketing at Firestone Tire and Rubber Company. The younger Connor, a Walsh High School graduate, received his bachelor's degree from The Ohio State University. He then took a job at Meldrum & Fewsmith advertising agency handling advertising for Glidden paints.

Five years later he was lured to Sherwin-Williams as director of advertising for the paint store group. He rose through the ranks and now is chairman and chief executive of a company that employs 38,000 and distributes its products in 121 countries. The company's annual sales top \$9 billion.

Connor also is chairman of the Greater Cleveland Partnership and sits on the boards of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame & Museum, Playhouse Square Foundation, University Hospitals Health System and United Way Services of Greater Cleveland.

He and his wife, Sara, have three adult children: Daniel, Erin and Kevin. The family home is in Hunting Valley.



Dan Coughlin argues against the perception that he is a living caricature of the gregarious Irish sportswriter. Let's just call him an anachronism.

He covered sports in his hometown of Cleveland for 48 years. In his 18 years at The Plain Dealer, he won many writing awards, including twice named best sportswriter in Ohio.

In the spring of 1982 he accepted an outrageous offer from the Cleveland Press to become its sports columnist. Under the weight of Dan's contract, however, the Press folded ten weeks later. The smiling Irishman found better luck on TV, the last 30 years at Channel 8.

During his career, Dan covered virtually every game in town. He traveled with the Indians and Browns. He covered big time college football, boxing, Indianapolis 500 auto races, softball and sandlots.

He sees symmetry in his career. In 1964 as a rookie reporter at The Plain Dealer he covered high school sports. Now semi-retired, he returns to the high school beat each fall to cover football games for Fox 8's "Friday Night Touchdown" show.

He has written two books about the eccentric bartenders, gamblers, athletes and other characters he has encountered. His first book, "Crazy with the Papers to Prove It," was a Number One best seller in Greater Cleveland two years ago. That prompted his second book, "Pass the Nuts."

The son of Arthur J. and Ruth Coughlin, Dan was born near the end of the Great Depression. His father was a railroad worker from a large West Side family who lived for many years on W. 115th St.

Dan, a 1956 graduate of St. Edward High School, attended the University of Notre Dame. He served 20 years on the St. Ed's board of trustees and recently was inducted into the school's Hall of Fame.

Dan and his wife, Maddy, met at a wake at McGorray's Funeral Home. Dan insists that funeral homes are much better meeting places than singles bars. "They're well lit. People are clean, dressed up and usually sober. Everybody tries to make a good first impression." The couple married in 1980 and now lives in Rocky River. They have four grown children -- Joe, John, Mike and Mary -- and two grandchildren.

For his outstanding work in journalism, Dan was inducted into the Cleveland Press Club Hall of Fame in 1996.



President's Note

In 2012, the Irish American Archives Society was very busy. Among our accomplishments, we:

- Held our 16th Walks of Life dinner.
- Worked on several events celebrating the 100th anniversary of boxer Johnny Kilbane's first feather-weight championship: collaborated with the Cleveland Public Library Sports Research Center on a traveling exhibit; cooperated with the Detroit Shoreway Development Corporation to landmark Kilbane's Herman Avenue home; assisted with research for an upcoming documentary; and celebrated the tapping of a limited edition "Fighting Heart" brew at Great Lakes Brewing Company.
- Shared displays and information about the history of the Irish in Cleveland at the Cleveland Irish Cultural Festival, the Kamm's Corners Hooley, and the VA Medical Center Diversity Day, and with a

delegation of students visiting from Achill Island under the auspices of the Mayo Society.

We also began working on projects that we will be sharing more about in 2013: our 2013 Walks of Life Dinner, a Johnny Kilbane monument, a collaboration with the Catholic Cemeteries Association to make information about historic burials more accessible, a guide to notable Irish and Irish-American burials in St. John Cemetery, and initial research for a commemorative booklet for the 150th anniversary of the St. Patrick's Day Parade in 2017—to name a few.

In addition to reading our newsletter, you can keep track of our activities on Facebook and on our website at www.irisharchives.org. We would love to have your volunteer and financial support to fulfill our mission of preserving and promoting the history of the Irish in Cleveland.

--Jim Brennan, IAAS Board



During her five decades, **Sister Susan Durkin** has always held the belief that “God leads you to the right places when you need to be there.”

She grew up in Cleveland, the third of four children of Edward and Barbara Durkin. Proud of their Irish roots in County Mayo, the family settled in Cleveland’s West Park neighborhood. She attended St. Mark elementary school and St. Joseph Academy.

After receiving her bachelor’s degree in psychology and elementary education from Ursuline College in 1985, she took a teaching position at St. Clare School in Lyndhurst and later at Urban Community School in Cleveland. It was while at the latter that she answered the call to religious life, joining the Ursuline congregation in 1987.

She later taught at Immaculate Conception, St. Patrick in West Park and Ascension schools. Along the way, she obtained a master’s degree in Pastoral Ministry from the College of Mount St. Joseph and a certificate in Non-profit Management from Case Western Reserve University.

In 2000, Sister Susan became Director of the Children and Family Program in the Ursulines’ HIV/AIDS ministry in Youngstown, working mainly with poor, intercity children. Under her leadership, the program grew to serving more than 60 children infected or affected with HIV/AIDS. She also established an annual fundraiser to support programs for these children. For her outstanding service she was named the Youngstown Difference Makers’ 2005 Person of the Year.

Though she loved working with the children and became like a mother to them, she responded to her order’s request to return to Cleveland in 2006 to become the congregation’s development director. Challenged with the task of raising money for the order, she and her staff introduced new and innovative fundraising initiatives including “Ursuline Derby Day,” organized around a Kentucky Derby theme, and a “Retirement Rally,” a raffle to support retired nuns.

Last June, she was named president of the Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland. In that position, she not only provides leadership for the religious order, but also oversees the spiritual lives of 177 nuns.

Sister Susan serves on the boards of Ursuline College, Beaumont School and Urban Community School.



Director's Corner

This issue I’m calling attention to a “Mystery Book.” The book itself has been identified, but it posed a mystery to me for several years.

At an event at the West Side Irish American Club several years ago, Eileen Kilroy, daughter of Dr. Edward Kilroy, first mentioned in passing a 19th century book about prominent Catholics in Cleveland. But I didn’t have a chance to press her for further information until she came up to the IAAS table at the Cultural Festival this past summer. When I asked her about the book, she brought me over to the boards of old pictures that Mary Hanna had first organized a number of years ago. She pointed to a printed profile and photograph of Tom Gallagher, the city’s second Catholic undertaker. Eileen Kilroy indicated that this profile had first appeared in the mystery book that she had mentioned a few years ago, but she didn’t know what the book’s title was or where it could be found and suggested that I get in touch with the archives of the Cleveland Catholic Diocese.

As I set that query in motion, I was also working on another project that I’ll be sharing more about in the coming months—

researching the “pioneer” Irish-born priests that are buried in St. John Cemetery. This search led me to a book that appears in its entirety online and turned out to be the volume Eileen Kilroy had first mentioned: A History of Catholicity in Northern Ohio and in the Diocese of Cleveland. The second volume of the book contains profiles of more than 200 people who were reckoned by its compiler as prominent Catholics circa 1903, when the book was published.

While a few the names of a few of the people profiled were familiar to me, many more were not known to me. I began to wonder: How many of these people have descendants still living in Cleveland? Are these descendants aware that their ancestors were profiled? Do they know the information that the profiles contain?

I invite you to check out the book online at: <http://archive.org/stream/cu31924010049215#page/n5/mode/2up>.

If you find that your great- or great-great-grandparents are profiled, let us know at iaasadmin@gmail.com. Help us add to our understanding of the history of the Irish in Cleveland.

--Margaret Lynch, IAAS Executive Director



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In his 34 years as a Cuyahoga County Common Pleas judge, **Richard J. McMonagle** has provided innovative leadership to the court, receiving the local Bar Association's highest rating.

He followed in the footsteps of his father, Common Pleas Judge George J. McMonagle, also a highly respected jurist who served on the court for 14 years, but who continued hearing cases until the age of 91.

Judge Richard McMonagle is a graduate of Gilmour Academy and ran track at Villanova University, where two of his teammates became Olympic gold medalists. He obtained his law degree from the school that is now Case Western Reserve University.

He was Presiding Judge of the Common Pleas Court from 1997 through 2005. During that time he founded the Mental Health Court and established and helped secure funding for a Drug Court in Cleveland Municipal Court. He also initiated the placement of all Common Pleas Court civil and crim-

inal cases online.

The judge is one of only eight jurists in Ohio chosen to handle Commercial Dockets involving complex business disputes. In most of the cases the soft-spoken jurist is able to negotiate a settlement before the case goes to trial. He also developed a separate Asbestos docket for the numerous Ohio claimants suffering from Asbestosis. The docket has become the model for all such Asbestos cases in the United States.

Judge McMonagle, 71, has served as chairman of the Judicial Conference in the Eighth Judicial District for the last eight years.

In 2005, he realized that the growing number of foreclosures was beginning to overburden the court. He suggested to other judges that the court create a special projects fund to hire additional employees to speed up the 22,000 foreclosure cases going through the court each year. His suggestion has resulted in the hiring of five magistrates plus additional deputies and clerks resulting in greater efficiency in handling such cases.

He and his wife, Paulette, live on Cleveland's West Side and have five adult children: Matthew, Christopher, Gretchen, Heidi and Helen, and nine grandchildren.



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