



## Save the Date!

Annual Walks of Life  
Awards Dinner  
Honoring

Barbara Brown and  
Margaret Flynn  
Jeanne M. Collieran  
Jack Kahl  
Martin A. Sweeney

February 27, 2014  
Holiday Inn – Independence

Donation/individual ticket:  
\$75 (\$44 tax deductible)

VIP patron ticket:  
\$150 (\$90 tax deductible)

For information about  
sponsorship or ad  
opportunities  
Or for inquiries, contact:  
Margaret Lynch  
(216) 941-5727 or  
iaasadmin@gmail.com

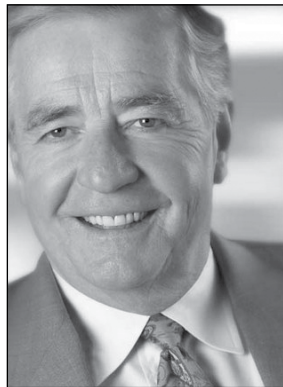
Taimid ag suil le do comhlúadar  
We look forward to your company!

# Preserving Our Heritage, Sharing Our Stories

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

Volume 17, Number 1 Winter 2014

## Walks of Life Honorees



**Jack Kahl** often recalls a day back in the mid-1970s. He was sitting in the lobby of Wal-Mart's corporate headquarters when Sam Walton, the company's founder, happened by and noticed Kahl was reading one of Peter Drucker's books on management. Walton asked Kahl about the book.

Kahl told Walton about Drucker's theories of management and promised to send him the book after he finished reading it. The two men continued to exchange books and ideas until Walton's death in 1992. As a result of this close relationship, Kahl was one of only four people outside Walton's family and Wal-Mart associates invited to Walton's funeral.

Kahl grew up in Cleveland and attended St. Edward High School. After graduating from John Carroll University in 1962 with a degree in business management, he took a job selling insurance. On one of his sales calls, a potential client was so impressed by Kahl that he offered him a job as the first employee of Melvin A. Anderson Co. The company had sales of \$82,000 that year. By 1971, sales had grown to more than \$800,000 and Kahl offered to buy the company, by then called Manco, a maker of adhesive tapes. As the down payment, Kahl used \$10,000 that he had set aside for carpeting and furniture for a new house he was building.

Under Kahl's leadership, the company became nationally known for its Duck® brand duct tape and Manco became the first company to receive three Wal-Mart "Vendor of the Year" awards in a single year. When Kahl retired from the company in 2000, sales topped \$300 million.

He continues to provide leadership advice and expertise to a variety of companies and nonprofit organizations. He served eight years as chairman of Cleveland Clinic's Fundraising Development Committee, helping to raise nearly \$1 billion. John Carroll University established a "Kahl Chair in Entrepreneurship" in 1998 and two years later St. Edward High dedicated its new student center the "Jack Kahl Student Life & Leadership Center."

He is the former chairman of Students in Free Enterprise, an organization that reaches more the 800,000 college students. In 1999 SIFE dedicated a wing of its new world headquarters the "Jack Kahl Entrepreneurship Center."

Kahl, a resident of Avon Lake, has five children and 14 grandchildren.





A double date in college later turned into a close friendship that blossomed into a successful business relationship for **Barbara Brown (left)** and **Margaret Flynn (right)**, co-owners of BrownFlynn, a Highland Heights communications and sustainability firm.



Barbara O'Brien was attending John Carroll University when her boyfriend, Chuck Brown, suggested a double date with his friends, Danny Flynn and Margaret ("Margie") Pigott.

Margie, who was attending Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, at the time, graduated in 1981 and married Danny. She took a job at National City Bank of Cleveland handling investor relations, but while pregnant with her second child, asked the bank to reduce her

hours to part time so she could spend more time with her family. The bank wanted someone full time for the job, so Margie began sharing her job with Barb.

In 1996, the two women decided to combine their talents further by opening their own corporate communications consulting business. National City became their first client. As sustainability became a buzz word in corporate offices, the women decided to expand their consulting work to advising companies on issues related to the environment.

BrownFlynn is the first U.S.-certified training organization to the Global Reporting Initiative in Amsterdam and is a Silver Consultancy Partner to the Carbon Disclosure Project. The firm now has a staff of 15 to assist its clients in improving upon positive social and environmental practices following the firm's motto of "Do good. Do well. Win."

Barb served as vice president of Leadership Cleveland's Class of 2009. She is a trustee of JumpStart Inc. and a member of the John Carroll University board of directors. She and husband, Chuck, have three grown children: Tom, Dan and Katie, and live in Cleveland Heights.

Margie served as president of the Leadership Cleveland Class of 2004 and is chairwoman of American Red Cross Blood Services of Northern Ohio. She is a member of the steering committee of the Corporate Sustainability Network and serves as an advisor to the GreenCityBlueLake Institute, and Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson's Sustainability Advisory Council. She is a guest lecturer at numerous conferences and colleges, and is author of several published articles about sustainability and entrepreneurship.

Margie and her husband, Danny, have three grown sons, Patrick, Ryan and Kyle, and reside in Highland Heights.



## President's Note

In 2013, the Irish American Archives Society celebrated many accomplishments:

- We held our 17th Walks of Life dinner—our best attended ever!--and began to plan our 18th which will be held February 27, 2014 (Save the date!).
- We worked with various entities in the Battery Park and Detroit-Shoreway districts to choose an artist for a work of public art commemorating Johnny Kilbane, one of Cleveland's own immigrant success stories!
- We worked on several events celebrating boxer Johnny Kilbane: contributed research to the Fighting Heart documentary that premiered at the Cleveland International Film Festival in April; collaborated with the Cleveland Public Library and Judge Ray Pianka to organize a panel discussion about the Irish in Cleveland Politics at the Justice Center in April; conducted a walking tour of "Kilbane Town" as part of the Gordon Square Arts District Day in June; and participated in a Battery Park neighborhood event in September.
- We presented displays about the history of the Irish in Cleveland at the Cleveland Irish Cultural Festival, the

Gordon Square Arts District Day, the Western Reserve Historical Society Family History Day, Irish Night at the Lake County Captains, the GAA National Games, an Achill-Cleveland Twinning reception, and the annual award dinner of St. Pat's Gaelic Football Club.

- We shared information about the Irish in Cleveland with an Irish Studies class at John Carroll University and with a delegation from the Achill Local Development Company.

While Johnny Kilbane will remain a focus in 2014, look for news about other forthcoming projects, such as our 2014 Walks of Life Dinner, a history walk at the Gordon Square Arts District Day in June; a heritage day at Holy Name Parish in September; and ongoing research for the 150th anniversary of the St. Patrick's Day Parade in 2017—to name a few. Find out more about us through our newsletter, on Facebook and at [www.irisharchives.org](http://www.irisharchives.org).

Jim Brennan, President, Irish American Archives Society



After receiving her Ph.D. in literature from Ohio State University, **Jeanne M. Collieran** returned to teach literature at John Carroll University, where she had earned a bachelor's degree in English in 1976. With her Irish background – her grandparents emigrated from Headford in County Galway, near the Galway-Mayo border – she was especially interested in Irish writers, especially James Joyce and Samuel Beckett. As she studied more of their writings, she became convinced they represented the best writers of the last two centuries. She decided to narrow her focus on their contributions.

After 26 years at Carroll, Collieran now has time to teach only one course in Irish literature each year. Most of her time is taken with her primary job as the university's dean of arts and sciences, overseeing 164 faculty members and more than three-fourths of the school's 3,000 students. She has received a McGregor Foundation grant to globalize the university's curriculum. The university, in conjunction with the Mayo Society of Greater Cleveland, each year sponsors two Carroll students to spend a fully funded semester at the University of Ireland-Galway and two students from the Galway school

to study at John Carroll. The two universities also exchange faculty members.

Since becoming dean in 2010, Collieran has worked to enhance the prominence of Irish Studies at the university. "The Irish have the most Nobel Prize winners in the 20th Century," she said. She also credits the Irish for the "most significant contribution to literature in the world," citing their long history of being prolific story tellers.

Collieran is the only faculty member at John Carroll to win all three of the university's major awards: the Culicchia Award for Teaching Excellence in the College of Arts and Sciences, the Curtis Miles Award for Service, and the University's Distinguished Faculty Award. In addition, the Irish Voice newspaper recently named her to its Irish Education 100 list for the second consecutive year.

She and her husband, Richard Weaver, have a son, James, and a daughter, Julia. The family lives in Cleveland Heights.



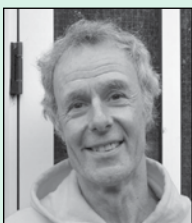
## Director's Corner

The Irish American Archives Society is spearheading the Johnny Kilbane Sculpture Project. IAAS has been working with a variety of community partners for the past half year in order to select an artist and a location. The artist is Dublin-based sculptor Rowan Gillespie, and the location will be in the Battery Park area of the Detroit-Shoreway neighborhood. A design concept will be presented in January 2014, and installation is planned for September 2014.



**Johnny Kilbane:** As countless Irish immigrants struggled to get a foothold in the United States, Johnny Kilbane, a scrappy Irish-American prize fighter, appeared on the scene in Cleveland. He not only captured the Featherweight Championship of the World for an unparalleled 12 straight years, but he also captured the hearts of the growing Irish community in Cleveland and far beyond.

Overcoming obstacles—the death of his mother at an early age, his father's blindness, the death of a young daughter, the loss of his property during the depression--his "fighting heart" inspired others to keep on fighting for their own dreams in this new world. Honoring Johnny Kilbane honors all the countless immigrants who have made Cleveland their home and persevered despite all odds.



**Rowan Gillespie:** The skills and talents of a world champion deserve to be commemorated by the skills and talents of a world-class artist. With prestigious commissions in Toronto, Boston, Dublin, and Belfast, sculptor Rowan Gillespie is such an artist. Gillespie is an internationally recognized sculptor who works

in bronze. Born in Dublin, he was raised in Cyprus. He studied at the York School of Art and the Kingston College of Art in England and in Norway. He apprenticed with British master sculptor Henry Moore.

**Battery Park:** The Battery Park site is within a few blocks of Johnny Kilbane's home at the time of his 1912 title fight. The 14-acre site was also home to the Eveready Battery factory, which closed in the 1970s and was shuttered until 2005, when the Vintage Development Group purchased it. This contemporary townhouse development is part of an ambitious neighborhood master-plan that includes a new entrance ramp to the Shoreway, renovated bicycle and pedestrian tunnels connecting with nearby Edgewater Park, and further development of property adjacent to the Battery Park site. The neighborhood's visionary reinvention is an instance of the fight that sparks the heart of our rust-belt city.

Apologies to all who received our annual fund mailing in December without a remit envelope; a remit envelope is included as an insert in this newsletter for your convenience. We hope you will consider supporting the Irish American Archives Society—either our ongoing mission of historic preservation or the Johnny Kilbane Sculpture project.

Margaret Lynch, IAAS Executive Director



**Irish American Archives Society Inc.**

P.O. Box 91756

Cleveland, OH 44101-3756

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Non-Profit  
US Postage  
PAID  
Cleveland, OH  
Permit No. 913



A man who is exceptionally proud of his Irish heritage, **Martin A. Sweeney** says one of his fondest memories happened about six years ago when he and his wife, Kate, took their four daughters to Ireland to visit the house where his grandmother, Celia Lavelle Gallagher, grew up.

The two-room stone house near Achill Island in County Mayo was in ruins, missing its roof. “We stood in my grandmother’s house in Tonragee where we came from. That was a pretty cool moment,” he said. “I can’t believe how short they were. I hardly fit through the archway.” He said all of his grandparents came to America from Ireland. “The Irish weren’t well received when they first got here,” he said, “but through perseverance and hard work, they were able to provide for their families and got to bring more relatives over here.” In 2011, he returned to Ireland with his five sisters. The highlight of that trip was a visit with Prime Minister Enda Kenny in Castlebar, County Mayo.

Sweeney has served as a Cleveland City Councilman since 1997 and was president of Council for eight years. This year he hopes to win a seat in the Ohio Legislature, serving residents in House District 14. His grandfather, Michael Sweeney, was elected to the state legislature in the 1940's and in 1953 left to join the cabinet of Cleveland Mayor Anthony J. Celebrezze.

As council president, Sweeney was much involved in the redevelopment of downtown. He was able to oversee legislation needed for development projects such as the Global Center for Health Innovation, Convention Center, Horseshoe Casino, as well as new construction in the historic Flats, and the expansion of Cleveland State University.

Sweeney, one of seven children of Gerald F. and Bride Ann Sweeney, grew up in the same W.133rd Street neighborhood where he now lives. He graduated from St. Ignatius High School and was a member of the legendary 1986 Cleveland State University basketball team that advanced to the Sweet 16 round in that year’s NCAA Tournament at the Meadowlands, a game the team lost by one point on a questionable call.

The Sweeney’s daughters are: Molly, 23, Bride, 21, Samantha, 17, and Margaret, 10.



**Board Members:** James G. Brennan, Sr. Maureen Burke, SND, Hon. Ken Callahan Jr., Dan Conway, Thomas Corrigan, John Coyne, Ray Daull, Brendan Doyle, Rosemarie Feighan DeJohn, Terence P. Joyce, Thomas Lynch, Margaret (Meg) McGarry, John Myers, Erin O’Toole, Kevin O’Toole, Max Rieker, Thomas J. Scanlon, J. Gerard Sheehan. **Trustees Emeritus:** Kevin McGinty, Eileen Mullally, Mary Karen O’Neil, Gerald Quinn.  
**Executive Director and Newsletter Editor:** Margaret Lynch. **Newsletter Contributor:** John Coyne.