



Irish American Archives Society Inc.

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Save the Date!

Thursday, February 23, 2017,
5:30 pm

**Annual Walks of Life
Awards Dinner
Honoring
Family manufacturing
businesses:**

**JTM Products (Murphy Family)
Norris Brothers Company
(Norris-Weir-McBride Families)
Cailin Development
(Finucane Family)
Kase Equipment
(Hawkins Family)**

**Windows on the River
2000 Sycamore Street
Cleveland OH 44113**

**Donation/individual ticket:
\$75 (\$44 tax deductible)
VIP patron ticket:
\$150 (\$90 tax deductible)**

**Contact Margaret Lynch at
iaasadmin@gmail.com or
(216) 941-5727 by February 8th
if you are interested in ad or
table sponsorship
opportunities.**

Preserving Our Heritage, Sharing Our Stories

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

Volume 20, Number 1 Winter 2017

Walks of Life Honorees

Bestowed annually since 1997, the Walks of Life Awards recognize living Clevelanders and northeast Ohioans of Irish heritage whose attainments in their chosen and diverse Walks of Life have been truly remarkable and stand as an inspiration to others. The awards preserve for posterity a record of their achievement. For the first time, this year's awards will have a theme --family manufacturing and industrial businesses—and will focus on the family business entity rather than on an individual.

Norris Brothers Company (Norris, Weir, and McBride Families)

In 2017, the fourth and fifth generations of the family-owned Norris Brothers Company celebrate the 150th anniversary of the business that their great-grandfather started in 1867, just two years after the end of the Civil War.

It was then that Thomas Norris, who 20 years earlier had immigrated with his family to Cleveland from Galbally in County Limerick, started a drayage business using horse-drawn wagons to haul freight from railroad cars and boats anchored along the Cuyahoga River to warehouses, retail stores and small manufacturing plants. At the time, Cleveland, with a population of 43,417, was a major transportation center reaching out to what was then the nation's other 36 states. In the following decade, Norris added house moving to his list of services.

In 1883, the company became Thomas Norris and Son after Thomas's youngest son, William J., joined his father in running the business. They advertised themselves as "Movers of Safes, Machinery, and Heavy Weights a Specialty." After his father retired, William Norris moved the company in 1913 from West 9th Street to its present location on Davenport Ave. overlooking Lake Erie. Three years later, following the deaths of both Thomas and William, the latter's wife, Jennie, took over the business.



William J. and Jennie Norris with their children, in front of the company's headquarters.

Over time, all of William and Jennie's 10 children worked in the family business, with the men handling the day to day operations and the women doing the bookkeeping, record keeping, and correspondence. Although the company was renamed "The Norris Brothers Co," as Jennie's granddaughter Catherine Weir McBride would later recall, "Grandma was the boss." At one point in time, the company's officers were all women, including two of Jennie's daughters, two daughters-in-law, and a granddaughter. The fourth generation to run the company included siblings Catherine Weir McBride (along with her husband Ken



Irish Family History Program

February 4, 2017: 12 noon to 3 pm

Western Reserve Historical Society

10825 East Boulevard, Cleveland OH 44106

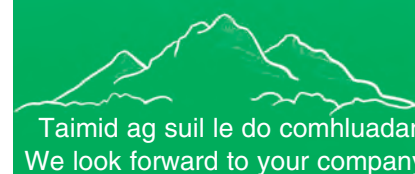
Margaret Lynch, Executive Director of the Irish American Archives Society, will present: "The Irish in Cleveland—Their History & Communities." The growth of Cleveland matched the growth of the Irish population in this area. Their communities, social and service organizations, churches and influence grew from the 19th century onwards. Learn which records may assist you most in researching your Irish ancestors. She will be joined by cemetery researcher Bernie McCafferty, who has created a surname database for St. John Cemetery. He will explain his work and provide look-ups as well. Volunteers will be available after the talk to assist in research. A behind-the-scenes library tour will also be offered. The program is sponsored by the Western Reserve Historical Society Genealogical Committee.

Fee \$15. To register, email: foxreinhardt@usa.net

Margaret Lynch and Bernie McCafferty will be discussing McCafferty's database of inscriptions at St. John Cemetery (on Woodland Avenue) as one of the many resources available in Cleveland for family history research.



Trustees: Sr. Maureen Burke, SND, Ken Callahan Jr., Dan Conway, Thomas D. Corrigan, John Coyne, Ray Daull, Brendan Doyle, Thomas Lynch, Margaret (Meg) McGarry, John Myers, Erin O'Toole, Kevin O'Toole, Jim Proctor, Max Rieker, Thomas J. Scanlon. **Trustees Emeritus:** Rosemarie Feighan DeJohn, Kevin McGinty, Mary Karen O'Neil, Gerald Quinn, J. Gerard Sheehan.
Executive Director and Newsletter Editor: Margaret Lynch. **Contributing Writer:** John Coyne.



Norris Brothers Company (Norris, Weir, and McBride Families) (cont.)



Many of the more recent generations of the Norris, Weir, and McBride families, ca. 2006.

McBride), Bernard Weir, Jack Weir, Francis Weir, and J. Michael Weir, and their first cousin Maurice “Moe” Norris. A fifth generation has joined Catherine and Ken McBride and Francis Weir, who are still active in the business.

Highpoints in the company’s history range from the delivery of structural steel for the construction of Public Hall in the 1920s to providing moving and rigging equipment for the installation of the Johnny Kilbane sculpture group in 2014. In recent years Norris Brothers Co. has expanded to many different segments of business, including heavy transportation, rigging, and moving and assembling machinery, along with the many facets of concrete work. Whether it’s hauling a 420,000 pound crown for a 50,000 ton press for Alcoa, 140-ton machinery for General Motors, 110-foot-long high-pressure tanks for NASA, or removing and replacing 1,000,000 square feet of concrete floor and foundations for Ford Motor, the company prides itself on meeting numerous challenges with the help of loyal employees from at least a half dozen local unions.

JTM Products (Murphy Family)



Jeremiah T. Murphy, founder of the Murphy family business

Many people are familiar with Murphy’s Oil Soap, but few may realize that the household cleaning product was first produced in Cleveland more than a century ago by the son of Irish immigrants from County Cork.

Jeremiah T. Murphy initially established his business, Phoenix Oil Co., in 1890 to manufacture metal-working oils and compounds for industrial uses. In 1905 he decided to add production of a soap made from vegetable oil to his factory located in what is now Cleveland’s Tremont neighborhood, across the Cuyahoga River from John D. Rockefeller’s Standard Oil Co.

Years later as construction of the Interstate Highway System was proceeding, Jeremiah’s grandson, Murlan Jeremiah Murphy, saw a need for concrete-curing compounds in road construction. To produce the product, he built a manufacturing plant in Madison, Ohio, which now makes the Chem-Masters line of construction materials. In 1968, the Phoenix Oil name was changed to the Murphy-Phoenix Co., to reflect the company’s products, which were then about evenly divided between the household cleaner and industrial compounds.

In the mid-1970s, Murlan’s four sons - Jerry, Ray, Paul, and Brian - realized that in order for the company to grow Murphy-Phoenix needed

a plan to sell its products beyond Ohio and the surrounding states. Paul was pursuing an MBA at the time, and for his thesis he created a marketing strategy to expand the company’s products nationally. The company implemented the strategy that soon made Murphy’s Oil Soap the third leading household cleaning product in the country. In 1991, the family sold the Murphy’s Oil Soap brand to Colgate/Palmolive Co. The sale enabled the company to diversify its product line, and the family to support local community endeavors through the Murphy Family Foundation.

Since then, what was once the Murphy-Phoenix Company is now JTM Products, and what was once the Spray-Cure Company is now ChemMasters, Inc. The two companies are operated by the fifth generation of the Murphy family, under the leadership of Paul Murphy and his sons, Patrick and Paul Jr. Family continues to be a priority for the company, and the Murphy family takes pride that multiple generations have worked there over the years. Using the knowledge and expertise handed down for more than a century, the Murphy family continues to provide lubricants and construction materials, with production facilities in Solon and Madison.



Current Murphy family generations—Paul Murphy with sons Paul Jr. and Patrick-- standing before a portrait of Paul Sr.’s father, Murlan J. Murphy

Kase Equipment (Hawkins Family)



Kelly and Pat Hawkins show off the printing equipment they make.

When the Edward Conry Hawkins family purchased Kase Equipment Corp. from Victor Eggert in 1983, Edward’s son, Patrick Hawkins, returned to a familiar place. Patrick had worked briefly for the company after graduating from St. Ignatius High School.

Edward Hawkins, a lawyer and certified public accountant, had represented the company prior to the acquisition. Following the purchase, Patrick initially worked in the company’s factory in Willoughby. A year later, he began to assist Victor Eggert in sales, rebuilding the company’s product line and seeking new customers. Unfortunately, that same year Victor had to curb his daily activities after suffering a heart attack.

The following year, Patrick became president of Kase Equipment, which designs and builds dry-offset printing machinery for printing on pre-formed plastic containers, lids

and closures, such as plastic five gallon pails, plastic drinking cups, plastic bottle caps for beverages, and plastic dairy containers for such products as yogurt and cottage cheese.

Since 1983, the company has grown from 18 employees and \$1 million in sales to 50 employees and \$8 million in sales. In the year 2000, the company moved into a new 80,000-square-foot facility in Valley View. As the company grew, more and more of its sales were outside the United States. Now, about half of Kase Equipment’s machines are sold internationally and can be found on every continent with the exception of Antarctica. In an ever-evolving market, Kase Equipment continues to adapt, as the engineering staff designs and builds new types of machinery for decorating plastic packaging.

Patrick, who graduated from John Carroll University with a finance degree in 1981, is one of eight children of Edward and Dorothy Walton Hawkins. The family’s Irish heritage dates back more than 150 years to Counties Galway and Mayo. Patrick and his wife, Megg, have six children, and his daughter Kelly works with him at the company.

Cailin Development



Louis Finucane with his son William at the Johnny Kilbane Sculpture, Fighting Heart

Dublin native Louis Finucane likes to describe himself as a “serial entrepreneur”.

A graduate of University College Dublin, he landed in America in 1986 on a student visa as part of an exchange program, funded by Smurfit Packaging, at the University of Missouri-Rolla. While there, he obtained a Master’s degree in Mechanical Engineering specializing in Ultra High Pressure Waterjet technology. Not long after graduating, in 1988, he made his way to Cleveland to work for Allied Steel and Tractor Products Inc. in Solon, a manufacturer of original equipment for the heavy construction industry.

Shortly after receiving a U.S. patent for his design of a high pressure waterjet apparatus for the cleaning of utility power plant boilers, he incorporated his first business; Cailin Development LLC, in 1994. The name plays directly to his Irish roots (Cailin is the Irish version of the name Colleen). He will only admit that his choice of name was not only motivated by a wish to comply with the Ohio Secretary of State’s requirement for a unique company name.

His company’s first venture was the acquisition of obsolete inventory in exchange for contracts to manufacture metal parts for his old employer, Allied Steel. In the following years, his company also supplied parts, such as steel pins, bushings, shafts and gears to a variety of large manufacturing clients. Cailin has always prided itself on having long lead items in stock ready to ship at a moment’s notice. Today Cailin also has diversified into the Steel Straightening and Flame Hardening services businesses.

While the engineering related business remains Louis’ first interest, his entrepreneurial spirit has led him to diversify significantly into the ownership and management of multi-family apartments and more recently, into the repurposing of old industrial buildings—an enterprise that contributes to the vitality of his adopted home.

Louis is grateful to all the many people who, with no consideration for themselves, helped make his American dream a reality.