



Irish American Archives Society Inc.  
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Save the Date!

Thursday, February 28, 2018,  
5:30 pm

Annual Walks of Life  
Awards Dinner

Windows on the River  
2000 Sycamore Street  
Cleveland, OH 44113

Donation \$75 (\$35 tax  
deductible) or \$150 VIP ticket  
(\$90 tax deductible)

Contact Margaret Lynch at  
iaasadmin@gmail.com  
by February 4  
if you are interested in  
ad or table sponsorship  
opportunities.

Invitation has been mailed  
and is also available online at  
www.irisharchives.org.



### Christopher Ronayne

During his senior year at Bay Village High School, Chris Ronayne wrote editorials for the school newspaper, determined that his future career would be as a journalist.

While attending Miami University of Ohio, however, he found his future was not in reporting, but in planning. After receiving a master's in urban planning and development in 1997, he took a job with Cuyahoga County Department of Development. While there, he got to work with County Commissioner Jane Campbell. After Campbell was elected Cleveland mayor in 2001, he joined her administration as Director of City Planning. He rose through the administration to become the city's chief development officer and later served as the mayor's chief of staff. During his tenure with the city, he is credited with being the chief architect of the city's Waterfront District Plan, an ambitious effort to reunite Cleveland's neighborhoods to Lake Erie.

In 2005, he was named president of University Circle Inc., the non-profit that coordinates the development and service for the square mile area that is home to many of the region's renowned medical, cultural and educational institutions.

Ronayne describes his work as a "dream job" enabling him to oversee and coordinate the planning and development of one of Ohio's premier "live and work" locations. University Circle is home to about 10,000 residents and is the work site for nearly 50,000 employees, including UCI's own 55 staffers.

Ronayne's great-grandfather left Ireland's County Cork to move his family to Chicago. Chris's family moved to Cleveland when he was 11.

Although his name is frequently mentioned as a candidate for Cleveland mayor or County Executive, Ronayne, 50, admits he still has work to accomplish in University Circle. One of his proudest achievements as UC president so far is the construction or renovation of 1,500 properties including One University Circle, the 20-story building with 270 residential units that opened last July. It was the first residential high-rise built in northeast Ohio in decades.

Chris and his wife, Natalie, chief development officer for Cleveland Metroparks, have two children: Audrey and Joseph. The family lives in the Edgewater neighborhood on Cleveland's West Side.

**Trustees:** Ken Callahan Jr., Dan Conway, Thomas D. Corrigan, John Coyne, Ray Daull, Margaret (Meg) McGarry, John Myers, Erin O'Toole, Kevin O'Toole, Jim Proctor, Colleen Reali, Thomas J. Scanlon. **Trustees Emeritus:** Rosemarie Feighan DeJohn, Mary Karen O'Neil, Gerald Quinn, J. Gerard Sheehan **Executive Director:** Margaret Lynch, PhD. **Newsletter Contributor:** John Coyne.

# Preserving Our Heritage, Sharing Our Stories

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

Volume 22, Number 1, Winter 2019

## 2019 Walks of Life Presenting Sponsor



Irish American Archives Society pays tribute to a unique and special presenting sponsor for the 2019 Walks of Life Awards dinner: The Irish Garden Club. The Irish Garden Club has seen several incarnations over the decades but it was revived as a non-profit organization in 2007 in order to spearhead a major renovation of the Irish Cultural Garden.

Irish Cultural Garden in fall, with the Fred A. Lennon Fountain in the foreground, and the Writers Court in the distance, with plinths featuring engraved portraits of Irish writers.

The Irish Garden is one of the unique Cleveland Cultural Gardens—a series of gardens representing the city's nationality groups. (In 2018, 30 had been fully established and 8 more were in development.) The concept for the Cultural Gardens, which would promote peace through mutual understanding, originated in 1916 but largely came to fruition during the 1930s. Ground was broken for the Irish Garden in 1933, and it was dedicated on October 29, 1939.

Local industrialist and philanthropist Edward Crawford spearheaded fundraising for renovating the Irish Garden in 2007, and the restored garden was re-dedicated on October 3, 2009, with refreshed planting, drainage, curbing, and paving to accentuate the garden's original design feature—a Celtic Cross. A Writer's Court celebrating Irish poets and playwrights was added and, in 2010, the Fred A. Lennon Fountain was dedicated.

Over the past decade, Irish American Archives Society has honored key individuals involved in maintaining and renovating the garden: Sheila Murphy Crawford (2008),



Edward Crawford (2012), Martin J. Sweeney (2014), and now Charlene Crowley (2019).

In honoring these individuals, we've been able to forefront the Irish Cultural Garden as a community asset-but one that needs active stewards to maintain it for generations to come.

The Irish Garden's volunteer clean-up crew frequently includes (pictured in Spring 2015) Larry Bachtel, George Beckmann, Maire Manning, Peggy Bennett, Mike Conkey, Bob and Sheila Murphy Crawford, Kay and Pat Hoynes, Mike Keenan, Bill Kennedy, Micky and Bonnie McNally, and (not pictured) Patti and Mark Behnke, Julie Brown, Mare Baucco, Mike Byrne, Colleen and John Cooney, Chris Cooper, Jim Crowley, Ann Drescher, Maureen Gregory, Teresa Kowalski, Tom McCauley, Dave McLaughlin, Mary Murphy, Pat Nemecek, Raymond Rackley, Colin Ray, Patty and Guy Reigling, and Monica and Joe Wilkes.

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



### Veronica “Vera” Casey

Veronica “Vera” Casey was born in Cong, County Mayo, to Frank and Florence Holian. The 3rd oldest of 9 children, she had to drop out of school at age 13 to help raise her siblings when her mother died suddenly. In 1949 she went to London in search of work and was “never bored, always broke.” In London she married her childhood sweetheart, Tom Casey, of Carrick, County Galway, on St. Patrick’s Day in 1952. Vera and Tom set sail on the Queen Elizabeth in 1956 and ended up in Cleveland where her sister Birdie lived.

For years Vera and Tom traveled back and forth to Ireland with their four children—Maureen, Patricia, Tom and Kathleen—but a call from her sister in 1975 about a nearby house for sale prompted them to settle once and for all in Lakewood.

Vera went to beauty school and owned hair salons in both Ireland and the United States. In 1985, Vera decided to expand her Cleveland hair salon business and add Irish Imports. Casey’s House of Beauty and Irish Imports was soon established. Easing out of the salon business, she opened Casey’s Irish Imports in its current location in Rocky River in 1988. In 2012 when her husband Tom was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, she transferred ownership of the shop to two of her daughters, Maureen Casey and Kathleen Casey Proctor. Casey’s celebrated 30 years in business this past October.

Tom, her beloved husband of 62 years, passed away in 2014. Vera is “Nana” to nine grandchildren and two great grandchildren. She has one brother, Mike Holian, residing in North Olmsted. Her sister Bridget “Birdie” Davern of North Olmsted is deceased. Her other remaining sibling, Mark Holian still resides in Cong, Co. Mayo.

Vera has always been an active member of a number of Irish organizations, selling tickets, buying tables, sponsorships, and ads, donating items, and faithfully attending events. She belongs to the West Side Irish American Club, Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, The Mayo Society of Greater Cleveland, and The Cleveland Gaelic Society, and was a founding member of the Irish Heritage Center. She has always been involved in parish life, whether at St. Clarence, St. Angela, or St. Christopher.

Vera was chosen as the Irish Mother of the Year in 2012 by the United Irish Societies of Greater Cleveland. In 2016, Vera and Casey’s Irish Imports were awarded the Celtic Warrior Award by North American Celtic Trade Association for outstanding merchant and member. In 2018 the Rocky River Chamber of Commerce presented Vera and Casey’s The Quality Business Award. Casey’s Irish Imports has also been named best gift shop on the Fox 8 Hotlist. In addition Casey’s sponsors a contestant each year for the Rose of Tralee.

Vera always says the keys to her success have been due to the love and support of her family and friends and her faith in God. Vera never forgot the last piece of advice her father gave her back in 1949 as she was boarding the train in Ballinrobe, County Mayo: “Vera, always stay close to Jesus and Mary and all will be well through life.”

### Charlene Crowley

Charlene “Char” Crowley had been volunteering in Cleveland’s Irish Cultural Garden on seasonal “clean-up” crews throughout the 1990s. She’d been enlisted as a parent volunteer by Irish dancing teacher Sheila Murphy Crawford, whose family and dancing school had taken responsibility for maintaining the garden for many years. Char had a deeper interest in the garden than most of her fellow parents, however. She was a landscape designer by profession.

Char knew that the Irish Cultural Garden had originally been designed by noted Cleveland landscape architect A. Donald Gray and that Clare Lederer, who wrote a history of Cleveland’s unique Cultural Gardens, had hailed it as the “Greenest of the Gardens.” Char went on a mission to locate the original plans for the Irish Garden, finding them in the archives at Cleveland City Hall in 1996.

When Cleveland industrialist and philanthropist Edward Crawford spearheaded fundraising for a complete renovation of the Irish Garden in 2007, Char immediately came on board. She was honored to work alongside landscape architect Jim McKnight to restore the Irish garden using Donald Gray’s original plan. Char was project manager during the construction of the Writer’s Recognition Court and the Lennon Fountain Plaza as well as the planting of an Allee of Trees leading into the garden.-She has recruited a volunteer crew to maintain the garden three or four times a year under her expert guidance.

Char found her way to the landscape industry after studying Fine Arts at Kent State University, with additional training in Landscape Horticulture & Design at Cleveland State University. She likes to think of landscape design as a three-dimensional art form. Now in her 42nd season, she got her start by working for her father in 1977 and shifted to retail garden management while living in Indiana. Since moving back to Cleveland in 1988, she has worked with several area firms. For the past 13 years she has been designing, primarily residential landscapes, for Eastside Landscaping Inc. in South Euclid. Eastside Landscaping earned a Landscape Enhancement Award from The Ohio Landscape Association in 2013, for Char’s work on the design and construction of additions to the Irish Cultural Garden.

Char was born in Syracuse, New York. Her mother lived in Tipperary Hill there, which boasts the only traffic light in the U.S. with an upside-down color sequence -- a tribute to the city’s Irish neighborhood. Her family moved to Cleveland in 1960, when her father took a job as a comptroller with Chase Brass and Copper Company in Euclid. She and 3 brothers and a sister attended St. Felicitas grade school, and she went to



Veronica “Vera” Casey



Charlene Crowley

### Regina High School.

As an adult Char learned ceili dancing with the Murphy school and introduced her only daughter Hannah to Irish dancing. Their shared involvement in Irish dancing led Char to the Irish Cultural Garden. Her daughter, now Hannah Combs, lives in Boulder, Colorado, with her husband Nicklaus. Char resides in Shaker Heights. Her bucket list includes visiting some of the gardens featured by Rae Spencer Jones in the book *1001 Gardens You Must See Before You Die*.

### Sean W. Hardy

Following his junior year at Bowling Green State University, Sean W. Hardy was so intent on getting an internship in finance that he called an executive at E.F. Hutton Co. daily for four weeks, finally offering to work the summer for free. The offer so impressed Hutton executives that he was offered a job - with pay. It’s just one example of how Hardy has used his persistence and talents to achieve his goals.

After the summer at Hutton, Hardy returned to Bowling Green to obtain a degree in marketing and adding one in finance. After graduating, he joined the sales force at Freeman Manufacturing & Supply Co., in Cleveland. Within nine years, he helped the company’s revenues double to \$33 million, and Hardy, at age 30, was named vice president of sales and customer service - the youngest senior leader in the company’s almost 100 years.

In 1998, Hardy was lured back to the industry where his passion still remained by Merrill Lynch. He later was recruited by McDonald Investments, which, in 2007, was acquired by UBS, the Swiss wealth management firm. Now, at age 52, he is senior vice president of Hardy Wealth Partners overseeing \$250 million in investments at UBS. He advises 130 families and executives including over a dozen businesses on the best ways to use their business and financial resources to execute their definitions of success.

Hardy said many of these clients are entrepreneurs or serial entrepreneurs who like him want to build the best businesses in their respective industries, care for their families, and efficiently manage their business taxes and the eventual transfer of their wealth. Instead of focusing just on their portfolios, he said, he tries to take the time to truly understand his clients’ businesses. His goal is to enrich the lives of his clients, many of whom are in their mid-careers, not only to prepare them for retirement, but also to have them think about such life management issues as how best to guide their children into adulthood and to recognize the needs of their parents in their senior years. He credits his success to applying his “Walk of Life” in his own business. Help people first, the rest will come in time.

Hardy said at Bowling Green he learned the value of giving back. In that regard, he serves on several boards including the Mayo Society of Cleveland, the Irish American Charitable Foundation, the Collaborative to End Human Trafficking, American Corporate Partners an organization that helps veterans transition into corporate America, Notre Dame College Development Committee, and Prayers from Maria, a foundation that awards grants to fund research into the causes, treatment and cure for childhood brain tumors.

He and his wife, Teresa, residents of Westlake, have three children, Reagan, Iain and Aidan.

### James J. McMonagle

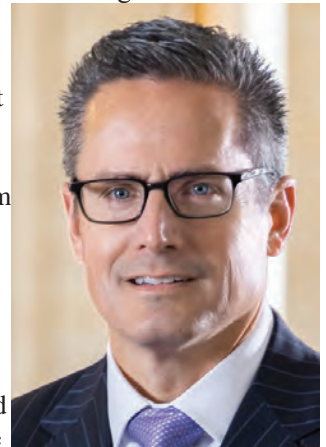
Jim McMonagle has enjoyed a varied and highly respected career as a lawyer. He has been a public defender, prosecutor, Judge, General Counsel, and a Partner with the law firm of Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP.

As a Common Pleas Court Judge, he was internationally recognized for his creative approach to resolving asbestos litigation. Soon after he was sworn in, he was assigned a case that focused on exposure to asbestos produced by the Johns Manville Corporation, which had filed for bankruptcy. His leadership and representation of all the judges in the country before Congress led to legislation that changed the Bankruptcy Code and permitted companies to remain as viable entities but still pay valid claimants who had been injured by exposure to asbestos.

A graduate of Georgetown University and Cleveland Marshall College of Law, McMonagle resigned from the bench in 1990, after serving for thirteen years. He then served twelve years as General Counsel, Senior Vice President and Secretary of University Hospitals Health Systems in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1992, President George H. W. Bush nominated him for a federal judgeship but his nomination was derailed by partisanship in the United States Senate. Presently, he is recognized on a national basis for his abilities as a mediator and arbitrator, and he practices in those areas throughout the United States. He handles matters as diverse as complex commercial litigation, securities litigation, malpractice cases, and employment and tort cases throughout the country and the UK. Additionally he has served as a board member on a number of Fortune 500 corporations and numerous not-for-profits. He is a lead Trustee in asbestos trust funds and has been a Claims Administrator in multi- billion dollar settlements.

His father, George McMonagle, was on the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court from 1966 through 1996. His brother, Richard McMonagle, served on the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court for thirty six years before retiring in 2014. His cousin, Timothy McMonagle, and Timothy’s wife, Christine McMonagle, both served on the Ohio 8th District Court of Appeals before retiring.

He and his wife Toddy are parents of William, Brendan and Molly. Another son, Jamie died in 1996. The couple lives in Chagrin Falls.



Sean W. Hardy



James J. McMonagle