



IAAS WALKS OF LIFE 1999
Joyce Casey

Your Scotch—Irish forebears—and all of your ancestors— would be proud of you, as all of us are here tonight.

Through your uncommon vision, your exemplary dedication, and your many noteworthy accomplishments in your chosen field, you have enriched our lives, brought honor to our common heritage, and made lasting contributions—both to the Irish community and the human community.

Like your grandmother, Hazel Cunningham, you are a teacher, though you have chosen the classroom of O'Casey and O'Neill to impart your lessons. For if theater, at its heart, is about the challenge, the problems, the joys of sharing the stage with each other for a little space, it is a schoolhouse that would teach us what we need for life.

You have reminded us, again and again—with your daring choice of plays, your innovative stagings and collaborations— that we are an audience, a community, of different backgrounds and persuasions, but that, at the same time, we share the human condition: we live, we suffer, we have wonderful times, we yearn and are disappointed, we love and hate, feel anger and regret, and want a better world for our children.

With the stunning area premiere of Brian Friel's Molly Sweeney and the world premiere of Thomas Cullinan's Rose of Tralee, you showed the richness of our Irish heritage and the complexity of our character.

With your justly acclaimed production of Angels in America, you reminded us, amid our howls of laughter, that evil and grace can meet in the same improbable bedroom.

For all these reasons, the Irish American Archives Society has selected you to receive the Walks of Life Award. And we would be honored in your acceptance of it.

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