



IAAS WALKS OF LIFE 1999
Susan Brooks Murphy

Your Irish forebears would be proud of you, as all of us are here tonight.

Through your uncommon vision, your exemplary dedication, and your many noteworthy accomplishments as a volunteer and director of volunteers, you have enriched many lives, brought honor to your heritage, and made lasting contributions—to both the Irish community and the human community.

The Irish have a special, almost poignant, sense of Time, and of the Fleetingness of Time...and how its inexorable passing has a way of leaving us, in Yeats's memorable words, "transfigured," sometimes "weary-hearted," and, we may be sure, "changed utterly." But Time, you learned somewhere along the way, cannot be hoarded and put on a shelf. Or hidden in a bank safe for another day. It is precious, all right. But its only value is in its spending.

So you have given away your time, again and again, along with your mind and energies, your people skills, and your wonderful patience—to battered woman and the children...to young children with health problems... to retarded children and adults who wanted to discover for themselves the pleasures and satisfactions of ice skating...to the foster children you and your husband Jerry have taken into your home over the years.

You have given all of them many things—attention, shared pain or laughter, moments of meaningful connection no one witnessed. But the most precious thing you gave them was your time. And you and they are changed because of it.

It is for these reasons, and for the example you have shown the rest of us, Susan Murphy, that 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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