



IAAS Walks of Life 2003
Thomas Campbell

Thomas F. Campbell, PhD. founder of the Irish American Archives Society, was born in Eniskillen, a small town on the Northern Irish island of Loch Erne. He left school in the sixth grade to become, intermittently for the next 16 years, a baker,, a welterweight boxer and, in 1949, a marathon champion. He is married to Marguerite Brown Campbell. They are the parents of Thomas F, Jr. and the late Ellen Healy Campbell, and have two grandchildren.

After WWII, Campbell worked with a Quaker volunteer service unit to shelter refugees in Germany, to aid elderly African-Americans in Washington, D.C. and to build roads and public health clinics in Mexico. At age 29, he decided to become a U.S. citizen and begin high school studies in Philadelphia. After six months on a bakers' union organizing picket line, he moved to Cleveland in 1955. Beginning as a gardener in the Heights area, he worked his way through Case Western Reserve University, by 1966 earning bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in history and political science.

Campbell began teaching at CWRU in 1958, at Ohio State University in 1963, and at Cleveland State University in 1966. There he was cofounder in 1967of the Institute of Urban Studies, now the College of Urban Affairs, and from 1969 to 1975 was its director. He also chaired the school's history department prior to his retirement in 1993. Since then, Campbell founded the CSU retired faculty organization as well as the Irish American Archives Society.

He has been deeply involved in the Cleveland community, having served as president of the City Club and elected to its Hall of Fame, as well as coordinator of two Cleveland Public Library levy campaigns and as a member of a Five County Mass Transit Study Group. Just some of the groups he has chaired include AIM-Jobs, a manpower training program for inner-city adults and youths; the Eighth District Court of Appeals nominating committee; the Cleveland City Council Campaign Committee, and the Cleveland Comprehensive Educational and Training Act (CETA) Planning Council.

Campbell also has served as trustee of the Nationalities Service Center; the adult literacy program Project LEARN; Friends of the Cleveland Public Library; Cleveland Human Relations Congress; the City Club Forum Foundation; Karamu House; the Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival; the Greater Cleveland Council for Human Relations, and Americans for Democratic Action. Additionally, he was cofounder and president of the Cleveland Restoration Society; a charter

member of the African American Archive Auxiliary; founder/president of the Friends of Shaker Square, and project director of the Cleveland Public Library's Cleveland Heritage Program sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities. In 1997 he was a candidate for mayor of Cleveland.

Campbell has authored three books and numerous articles for historical journals, magazines, newspapers and encyclopedias, including The Encyclopedia of the Irish in America. His devotion to education and history found further expression in his development and co-hosting of 16 television shows portraying Cleveland ethnic communities, "We Who Built America," as well as a number of other programs focusing on practical politics and historical profiles.

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