



IAAS WALKS OF LIFE 2006
Robert Emmett Sweeney

Robert Emmett Sweeney recently celebrated his 81st birthday in Gates Mills, where he lives with his wife, Katherine. His father's family was from County Sligo and his mother's from Mayo. His father, Martin L. Sweeney, was a Cleveland Municipal Court Judge, a U.S. Congressman and national president of the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

A graduate of St. Ignatius High School, Bob Sweeney attended Georgetown University, and graduated from Baldwin Wallace College and Cleveland Marshall College of Law. His government service included the U.S. Congress, where he was the last at-large representative of the entire state, and the Cuyahoga County Commission, where he was instrumental in preserving the Playhouse Square theater district.

Recognized as a preeminent trial attorney, Bob represented many working men and women in the building trades. He was among the first in the country to file an asbestos lawsuit on behalf of his clients, many of whom were asbestos pipe coverers of Irish descent. His work helped discover the "smoking gun" paper trail that identified the historic corporate knowledge of the cancer-causing nature of asbestos.

Bob Sweeney served as a national director of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and has been a strong advocate for civil and human rights in Ireland. In 1992 he was chosen to represent a dozen national Irish organizations before the Democratic Party Platform Committee, which ultimately adopted an "Irish Plank" concerning peace and justice issues in the North of Ireland the first of its kind. This was part of the foundation laid for President Clinton's historic brokerage of the Good Friday Accord. Bob also is known for his support of Sinn Fein's efforts to install the political process as the main vehicle for the cause of Irish nationalism and the struggle for human and civil rights. During his visit to Cleveland last spring, Gerry Adams spent a day at the Sweeney home. Further, Bob Sweeney is a founding member of the Ireland Chamber of Commerce in the U.S.A. (ICCUSA).

Bob's family includes 13 children, three step-children, 34 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

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