



2014 Walks of Life Honoree

Jeanne M. Colleran

After receiving her Ph.D. in literature from Ohio State University, Jeanne M. Colleran returned to teach literature at John Carroll University, where she had earned a bachelor's degree in English in 1976. With her Irish background – her grandparents emigrated from Headford in County Galway, near the Galway-Mayo border – she was especially interested in Irish writers, especially James Joyce and Samuel Beckett. As she studied more of their writings, she became convinced they represented the best writers of the last two centuries and narrowed her focus on their contributions.

After 26 years at Carroll, Colleran now has time to teach only one course in Irish literature each year. Most of her time is taken with her primary job as the university's dean of arts and sciences, overseeing 164 faculty members and more than three-fourths of the school's 3,000 students. She has received a McGregor Foundation grant to globalize the university's curriculum. The university, in conjunction with the Mayo Society of Greater Cleveland, each year sponsors two Carroll students to spend a fully funded semester at the University of Ireland-Galway and two students from the Galway school to study at John Carroll. The two universities also exchange faculty members.

Since becoming dean in 2010, Colleran has worked to enhance the prominence of Irish Studies at the university. "The Irish have the most Nobel Prize winners in the 20th Century," she said. She also credits the Irish for the "most significant contribution to literature in the world," citing their long history of being prolific story tellers.

Colleran is the only faculty member at John Carroll to win all three of the university's major awards: the Culicchia Award for Teaching Excellence in the College of Arts and Sciences, the Curtis Miles Award for Service, and the University's Distinguished Faculty Award. In addition, the Irish Voice newspaper recently named her to its Irish Education 100 list for the second consecutive year.

She and her husband, Richard Weaver, have a son, James, and a daughter, Julia. The family lives in Cleveland Heights.