



**2019 Walks of Life Honoree**  
**Christopher Ronayne**

Managing the sports and editorial pages of his high school newspaper, Chris Ronayne left Bay High School for Miami of Ohio determined that his future career would be as a journalist.

While attending Miami University of Ohio, and after a term abroad in Luxembourg, he found his future was not in reporting, but in planning. He took a job with Cuyahoga County Planning Commission while completing his master's degree in urban planning and development in 1997. There, he got to work with County Commissioner Jane Campbell. After Campbell was elected Cleveland mayor in 2001, he joined her administration as Director of City Planning. He rose through the administration to become the city's Chief Development Officer and later served as the mayor's Chief of Staff. During his tenure with the city, he is credited with being the chief architect of the city's Waterfront District Plan, an ambitious effort to reunite Cleveland's neighborhoods with Lake Erie.

In 2005, he was named president of University Circle Inc., the non-profit that coordinates development and service for the square mile area that is home to many of the region's renowned medical, cultural and educational institutions.

Ronayne describes his work as a "dream job" enabling him to oversee and coordinate the planning and development of one of Ohio's premier "live and work" locations. University Circle is home to about 10,000 residents and is the work site for nearly 50,000 employees, including UCI's own 65 staffers.

Ronayne's great-grandfather left Ireland's County Cork to move his family to Chicago. Chris's family moved to Cleveland from Chicago when he was 10.

Although his name is frequently mentioned as a candidate for Cleveland mayor or County Executive, Ronayne, 50, admits he still has work to accomplish in University Circle. He is most proud of the work UCI engages in with thousands of school age learners every year as well as the construction or renovation of 1,500 properties including One University Circle, the 20-story building with 270 residential units that opened last July.

Chris and his wife, Natalie, chief development officer for Cleveland Metroparks, have two children: Audrey and Joseph. The family lives in the Edgewater neighborhood on Cleveland's West Side.

2019 Walks of Life Award of the Irish American Archives Society, Cleveland OH.